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NATIONAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

ITS GROWTH AND PRINCIPLES

THE CULMINATION OF MODERN HISTORY

BY

RAMSAY MUIR

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LONDON

CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LTD

1918

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Printed in Great Britain

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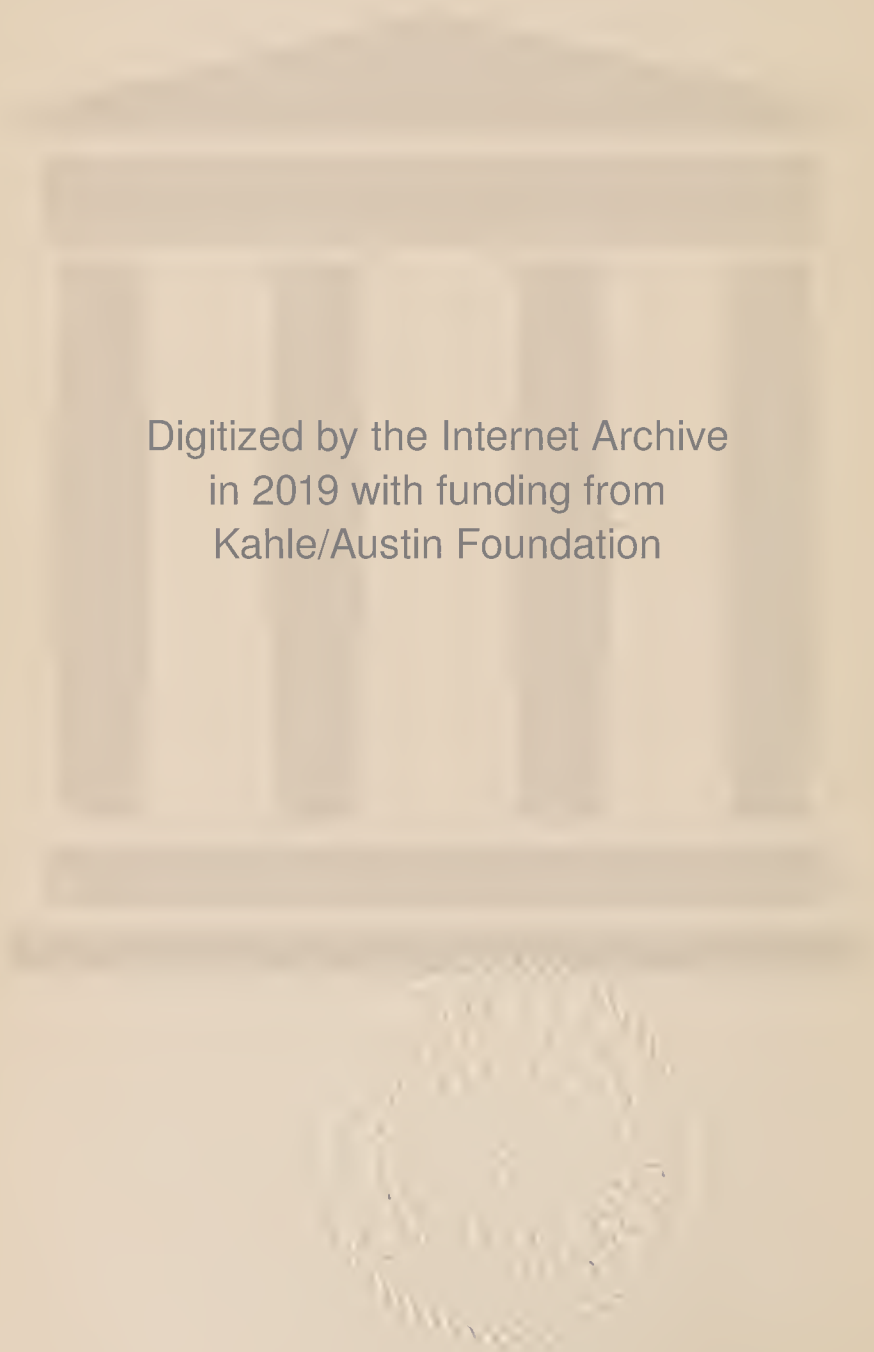
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PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is twofold. In the first place, I have tried to provide a brief historical survey of the development of parliamentary institutions in the modern world, such as will put the ordinary citizen in possession of the facts which he requires if he is to form a sound judgment upon the working of the system in our own and other countries. In the second place, I have tried to use this historical survey as a means of elucidating the problems of self-government, the difficulties which it has to face, the conditions which are necessary for its success, and the ways in which it is affected by the characters and traditions of the various nations which have adopted it.

The book makes no pretence to be a scientific historical treatise on its subject. It is not systematic or exhaustive; it includes few facts which are not, or ought not to be, pretty generally known; it leaves almost untouched the development of the institutions of half the countries of Europe, and of all the new lands of the non-European world, excepting the United States; not because these countries do not present features of great interest, but because I had to keep my book within reasonable compass, and the main points which I wished to elucidate seemed to be adequately illustrated in the countries I have selected for fuller treatment. On the

other hand, the book is not a text-book, or condensed compendium of established facts. I fear it contains more disquisition than narrative, more argument than fact. It is, in short, a political essay rather than a formal history; an attempt at what may be called 'historical politics,' a blend of narrative and analysis.

Although I am very conscious of the defects of what I have written, I believe there is room, and need, for books of this type; books which will aim at elucidating political problems in the light of their history, and especially of their recent history; books designed for the use of the ordinary intelligent citizen who is neither an expert historian nor a professed political philosopher. It seems to me a strange thing that (so far as I am aware) there should be in English no book which tries to cover the ground I have attempted to survey. There are excellent analyses of the formal constitutional systems of the various modern States. There are admirable treatises on the working of the government of this country or that. There are useful summaries of modern political history which include the main facts about constitutional changes. But there does not, I think, exist any book which attempts in a clear and broad way to show how it has come about that the institutions of self-government have been adopted within a very short space of time in every land of Western civilisation, how historical circumstances have modified the forms which they have assumed, how these forms compare with one another in actual working, and how their development elucidates the problem of self-government, and the dangers against which it has to guard. I am not so foolish as

to imagine that I can, in so short a compass, have dealt satisfactorily with a theme so complex ; the most I can hope is that I may help some of my fellow-citizens to understand more clearly the political developments of the recent past, and therefore to approach with fuller understanding the political problems of the immediate future.

This book is in some sense a sequel or companion to two other books, *Nationalism and Internationalism* and *The Expansion of Europe*, in which I have attempted to apply the same method to other great political problems. The three volumes were originally intended to be printed together under the general title of *The Culmination of Modern History*, though this book and *The Expansion of Europe* have both been considerably expanded from their original form. All three took their rise from a lecture given a couple of years since, in which I tried to show to a popular audience how all the greatest political developments of the modern world were being brought simultaneously to a great test in the world-war. These main developments seem to me to be, *first*, the growth of the idea of nationality, which is the foundation of all the rest ; *second*, the growth of the idea of international co-operation and international law, which is the fulfilment, not the antithesis, of the first ; *third*, the growth of the theory and practice of self-government through representative institutions, which is only possible in States unified by the sense of nationality ; and, *fourth*, the expansion of the political influence of Europe, and of the political ideas to which Europe has given birth, over the non-European world. The relation between these

themes is extremely intimate; and the three books in which I have tried to deal with them, though each is independent of the others, form parts of a single whole. Taken together, the three books form, in some sort, a history of the political development of the modern world; though no one can be more conscious than I of the incompleteness and inadequacy of the treatment. The true order of the three books (which has not been followed in publication) is (1) *Nationalism and Internationalism*; (2) *National Self-Government*; (3) *The Expansion of Europe*.

R. M.

MANCHESTER,
September 1917.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	vii
I. THE ORDEAL OF SELF-GOVERNMENT . .	1
II. THE MEDIÆVAL ESTATES AND THE REPRESENTATIVE PARLIAMENT	11
III. BRITISH SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE MODERN AGE	18
IV. THE ERA OF REVOLUTION AND THE DOGMAS OF LIBERTY	34
V. THE POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	54
VI. THE ERA OF LIBERAL REVOLUTIONS, 1815-1855 .	63
VII. THE ERA OF NATIONAL UNIFICATION, 1850-1878	108
VIII. RIVAL SYSTEMS IN OPERATION, 1878-1900 .	169
IX. THE BREWING OF THE STORM, 1900-1914 .	230
X. THE SUPREME ISSUE	278
INDEX	299

NATIONAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

I

THE ORDEAL OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

When the future historian surveys the political state of the world as it was on the eve of the cataclysm of the Great War, he will record, as one of its most significant facts, that parliamentary institutions had become almost universal, either as the controlling factor, or at least as an important element, in the government of civilised states. With the institution of the Russian Duma in 1905 and of the Turkish Parliament in 1909, the only surviving non-parliamentary states of Europe had fallen into line with the rest during the decade immediately preceding the war; outside of Europe not only all the American republics, and all the self-governing British colonies, but also the Japanese Empire, had adopted this characteristically Western mode of government, while even China and Persia had made experiments in the same direction. In every state except Britain and the communities which have sprung from her loins, these representative systems had been the product of the last hundred years, and in most cases of the last fifty or sixty years, immediately preceding the war; and even in Britain it was only during the last half-century that the bulk of the people had obtained the franchise. Our historian will note that in every

case these systems had been modelled, directly or indirectly, on the British system. And he will observe, perhaps with some surprise, that the only highly developed communities in the world in which this prevailing fashion had not been fully followed were those of India and Egypt, although both of these countries were under the control of the Mother of Parliaments herself; and that the popular discontents which found expression in both of these countries largely turned upon the demand that they also should be endowed with the system of government now accepted as one of the marks of a civilised state. Both the universality of this movement towards the adoption of self-governing institutions, and the still surviving exceptions to it, will seem to our historian, we may be sure, to be highly significant. His conclusion will and must be that the necessity of an effective public control over, or co-operation in, the business of government had become with quite extraordinary rapidity an accepted principle of Western civilisation.

So much of the future historian's judgments we may securely anticipate, because we have thus far attributed to him only a statement of undeniable facts. And there is a further judgment which we may perhaps as confidently expect him to make. He will record that the Great War was the first really severe test to which the modern system of representative government had been exposed in most of the states affected by it, and that the ideal of self-government, equally with the ideals of nationalism and internationalism, was on its trial in this gigantic conflict. What we cannot yet venture to anticipate is his verdict on the results of the great ordeal. Will he have to say that the system of government by

public discussion and under public control broke down under the ordeal and proved its inefficiency, at any rate for the purposes of war; that the states which emerged with most success were those in which popular control had been only formal, a mere mask covering the operations of an efficient centralised power; and that as a result of the war even the nations in which self-governing institutions seemed most deeply rooted had been driven in self-defence to change their systems? Or will he record that on the whole the struggle proved a triumph for the system of popular government, and firmly and finally established it as the governing principle of all civilised states? Or will his verdict perhaps be a mixed one? Perhaps he will conclude that in some cases the modern system proved its strength and efficacy, and in others not: that it answered every call better than could have been foretold in those communities which were, by reason of the training and habits of their citizens, capable of using freedom nobly, and of imposing willingly upon themselves a discipline almost as effective as that elsewhere imposed by authority; that in other communities it broke down and led to disastrous results because the mass of citizens were not awake to their responsibilities, having been endowed with political power before they were ready for it; and that in yet other cases the tragedies and agonies of the war were to be attributed, not to the deficiencies of popular government, but to the fact that popular government had been unreal, and that the members of these communities had not been allowed to exercise such a share in common affairs as their training and capacities would have justified.

Although it is impossible as yet to anticipate the

final verdict of history upon these momentous questions, since the great ordeal will not end with the war, and the problems of reorganisation during the generation following the war will afford a yet more acute and searching test, it is equally impossible and dangerous to avoid thinking about them. And the only profitable way of thinking about them is to co-ordinate and analyse, so far as we can, the experience we have had of the working of the institutions of self-government. That experience has been as yet, for the greater part of the world, very brief indeed, and the conditions have been changing with such amazing rapidity while we have acquired it that no one is justified in proclaiming very sweeping or dogmatic conclusions. But at least it has been sufficiently varied in its range, and in the case of the British communities sufficiently lengthy, to entitle us to form reasoned opinions.

The ordeal of a great war is a far more searching test for the institutions of self-government than it is for those of open or veiled autocracy, just because the institutions of self-government, by their very nature, are manifestly designed primarily for a normal state of peace. The conduct of affairs by persuasion and agreement is obviously inconsistent with a state of war, in which force takes the place of persuasion, and compulsion of agreement. Self-government involves continual compromise, and compromise must always imply a certain sacrifice of efficiency. That is the inevitable price which must be paid for liberty, even in times of peace. It is a price worth paying if it secures the real participation of the whole community in responsibility for the common welfare; but it inevitably forms a handicap in war. And if a self-governing state acquits

itself, in such an ordeal as that through which we are passing, with anything like the resolution, self-discipline and fixity of purpose, which are so much more easily attained in a state organised on an autocratic basis, the demonstration which will thus be given of the value of self-government will obviously be all the more cogent.

A state which has organised itself primarily for war, and which has willingly submitted itself to the rigid discipline of a military autocracy mainly in the hope of victory, must, if it is to justify these sacrifices, achieve nothing less than complete triumph. A nation which has organised itself primarily for peace, and which has with its eyes open accepted the risks and the inefficiencies of a system of government by discussion for the sake of the moral values to be derived from it, will justify itself if it only succeeds in defending its existence; nay, it will not be finally condemned even by defeat. For although the doctrine of power becomes meaningless and futile in the hour of defeat, and no man can believe that Might is Right except when Might is on the side of the causes which he holds dear, the doctrine of liberty becomes only more sacred in disaster, and more capable of appealing to the heroic in men.

Popular participation in government is in natural accord with the essential Western ideas of Liberty, and of Rational Law reflecting the public conscience [1]; and for that reason it is only in Western communities that any advance towards it has ever been made. But this is not to say that Liberty and Rational Law can only exist, or will even under all conditions thrive best,

[1] See the first essay in *Nationalism and Internationalism*, which discusses these ideas, and was designed as an introduction to the whole series of essays of which the present volume is a part.

under its shelter. To make such a claim would be to deny the value of all that has been achieved for civilisation in most of the great states of the world. The most nearly perfect systems of Rational Law that have ever been created were due to the Roman Empire and to the autocracy of Napoleon ; and it is certain that the British rule has given to India a far more just and unvarying system of law than could ever have been devised by a body representing a majority among the many conflicting races, castes, and religions of India, even if such a body could ever have been formed. Again, liberty of conscience, liberty of thought, liberty of speech, liberty of the press, liberty of action may exist in the highest practicable degree under a non-popular government, as they do to-day in India ; on the other hand, they may be, and sometimes have been, denied by representative governments, as in modern Hungary.

Nevertheless it is the natural tendency of all peoples among whom the seminal ideas of Western civilisation have taken root to strive towards self-government, and accordingly the history of Europe is full of experiments in that direction. But most of them, interesting as they are in themselves, have little or no bearing upon the problems of government of the great modern states. The little city-republics of ancient Greece and of mediæval Italy, Germany and Flanders were on so small a scale that they afford practically no guidance for the government of the nation-state. The most essential feature of their system was the direct participation of all citizens in the main functions of government, and this was only possible when they could all assemble in a single market-place, and all have some acquaintance at least with the leading members of the

community. So Aristotle held that no state could be healthy which had more than ten thousand citizens; and Rousseau, with the model of Geneva in his mind, could maintain that democracy was impossible in a large state, and that the system of representation was a denial of its very essence. Monarchy was in his view the only efficient method of government for a very large state, and he would probably have approved for nation-states the system of the first and third Napoleons—the system of government by an autocrat, supported by frequent plebiscites by universal suffrage.

But there is one respect in which the experience of the small city-states, where every citizen directly and constantly shared in the work of government, concurs with the experience of the great modern states wherein any such participation is impossible. Both alike point to certain essential conditions without which government by discussion and agreement must be impossible or disastrous in its results. These conditions are two.

In the first place, the mass of active citizens who take a share in the direction of affairs must be in some degree educated, not merely in the formal sense, though that is important, but still more in the sense of having been trained in the practice of co-operation in common affairs. No community can become self-governing whose members are not capable of appreciating the complexity of political issues, or have not learnt by practical experience the need for compromise, for give-and-take, for the loyal acceptance of results arrived at after discussion, and for the willing subordination of self; and these things can only be acquired by training. Where these qualities are lacking, the institution of the forms of self-government must lead either to anarchy, or to the enthrone-

ment of unscrupulous intriguers who play upon the ignorance of the voters and their lack of political intelligence. It was only in the most highly educated society of the ancient world, Athens, that even city-democracy ever became a reality; and even there it was insecure, disturbed, and short-lived. The creation of this political aptitude among a people is not to be easily or rapidly brought about. It takes time. The best system of school-instruction is by itself quite insufficient to produce it. Only the formed habit of co-operation and discussion in minor matters can bring it fully into being, and the number of societies whose conditions of life have made it easy for its citizens to acquire this habit has been small.

The second condition of the successful working of self-government is that there must exist a real unity of sentiment in the community which attempts it. When a community is divided by deep and irreconcilable antipathies, by the unconquerable distrust and dislike of one element in it for another, discussion becomes futile and agreement impossible, and the attempt at self-government leads only to anarchy. Even in the city-state this condition often existed, and Aristotle recognises it as fatal to civic health in his discourses on what he calls στάσις—meaning by that phrase neither more nor less than fundamental disunity of sentiment among the citizens. Yet in the city-state unity of sentiment was comparatively easy to create, for the citizens dwelt together within the same ring-wall, discussed public affairs together in the market-place, knew their leaders by sight and voice, saw their common needs and their common dangers at close quarters. In the great modern state unity of sentiment is indeed a hard thing to create.

It has, in fact, been created only by one force—by what we call the national spirit; and this is the supreme significance of the growth of the national spirit in Europe, that it alone has made self-government on the national scale possible. The only communities in Europe or in the world in which self-government has been successfully applied are those in which the national spirit is dominant. Where it is once firmly rooted, the national spirit can not merely survive, but can even turn to good ends, differences of party, creed and class. For these differences produce a deepened sincerity and a greater pith and force in discussion, so long as those who hold them are thinking primarily of the welfare of the nation as a whole, and so long as the mass of men can continue to believe that their opponents (however mistaken) are genuinely desirous of national advantage as they conceive it, and not merely of sectional advantage. But where the national spirit does not exist—where the state consists of acutely hostile national groups, each permanently suspicious of the others, and some of them aiming merely at the establishment of their racial ascendancy—self-government in any real sense cannot exist; and if its institutions are established, their effect will either be nullified by the clash of conflicting and irreconcilable factions (as in Austria), or they will afford to the better organised master-race the means of imposing its ruthless dominion upon its recalcitrant subjects, as in Hungary. The unifying force of the national spirit is indeed the only factor which has yet been discovered that can make self-government as real a thing in the large state as it was in the little city-state. It was because England was the first of the European nations to become conscious of her nation-

hood that she was also the first to work out a practicable system of national self-government. It was also because the English people had obtained some training in the practice of self-government on the petty scale of the village, the town and the county, and later of the trading company, the trade union and the co-operative society, that they were able to show the continuous political aptitude which alone enabled their system of national self-government to establish itself and to enlarge its range.

It is with the development of representative self-government on the national scale that we are concerned in this essay ; and if we are to understand the conditions of its well-being it is necessary to survey in outline the processes by which it has been brought into being, how it has worked under various conditions, and how the states in which it has been made effective compare with those in which it has been little more than a form.

II

THE MEDIÆVAL ESTATES AND THE REPRESENTATIVE PARLIAMENT

The rudiments of a representative system arose, in most of the countries of western Europe, out of the conditions of feudalism; and its source is to be found in the courts of feudal princes, which their chief tenants were bound to attend, and in which these tenants found a means of ensuring that the conditions of the feudal contract were not interpreted to their disadvantage. As it was impossible for the whole body of minor feudal lords to attend, the custom grew up during the twelfth century (perhaps it was borrowed from the Church) of allowing them to act through representatives. In this system the lower grades of the feudal hierarchy—the small freeholders and the semi-servile peasantry—had, of course, no part. But the two elements in a mediæval state which were in some degree independent of the feudal hierarchy, the great corporations of the Church, and the semi-autonomous merchants of the towns, could be, and in nearly all Western countries presently were, worked into the scheme. Thus arose the Three Estates of the Nobles or feudal tenants, the Church, and the Towns; in some cases the lesser nobles, acting through their representatives, formed an additional estate. These Estates claimed the right to be consulted on any change in the customs by which the rights and duties of their castes were defined, and on any modification in the

customary dues which they were called upon to pay. Hence legislation and taxation came to be regarded as falling to a varying and undefined extent within the province of the Estates in nearly all the countries of western Europe, and out of this system, under favourable conditions, a parliamentary system could grow up.

In actual fact, however, the Estates did not develop into a true national parliament in any country except England, and this for several reasons.

In most cases the Estates were purely provincial organisations, very jealous of their provincial 'rights' and 'liberties,' and they therefore became actual obstacles in the way of national unity, which was represented, in most countries, solely by the person and authority of the king and his officials. This was the case, for example, in Spain, where the Cortes or Estates of Castile and (still more) of Aragon had acquired during the mediæval period a remarkable degree of power. When Spain became a united kingdom, the overthrow of the provincial estates formed part of the process of unification, and their purely provincial patriotism provided excuses for the high-handed autocracy of Charles v. and Philip II. In the Netherlands Charles v. tried to give some unity to the disconnected provinces which he had inherited by setting up a States-general for them all, but the existence of this body was at first resented by the local patriotism of the provinces. In France the Crown tried the same device during the fourteenth century; but the States-general (as this common assembly was called) showed themselves so grasping of power and so unpatriotic during the wars with England that the kings summoned them as little as possible, and were probably supported by popular opinion in doing so. It was the

easier for the king to adopt this policy, because the provincial estates still survived in many of the provinces : they survived, indeed, in the provinces known as the *pays d'état* down to the French Revolution. How great an obstacle these provincial estates formed to the growth of a strong state was perhaps most clearly illustrated in the case of Prussia : one of the main tasks of the Great Elector, the real founder of the greatness of the Hohenzollern monarchy, was the destruction of the privileges claimed by the provincial estates in the various scattered districts of his realm. In many countries, as, for example, in Austria, these provincial estates survived into the eighteenth or even into the nineteenth century. But they had become meaningless forms, reduced to impotence by the growth of royal autocracy. Only in England were there no provincial estates ; only in England were these assemblies from the first national and not provincial in scope, and even in England there was at some moments a danger that they might be provincialised, as when Edward I. summoned separate meetings for the north and for the south. More important, only in England did the Estates develop into a real parliament, by becoming representative not merely of sharply defined castes or privileged classes (*i.e.* of estates in the strict sense), but of the whole community.

For the second great defect of the Estates was that their members were definitely the representatives of legally organised and unalterable castes. In all countries save England the class of nobles or feudal landholders was sharply cut off from other classes, and was a strictly defined hereditary caste, all of whose descendants possessed the privileges of nobility, which could be acquired by no one else except by special grant from the Crown.

In England the lesser nobles, or *minores barones*, were from an early date merged in the class of knights, most of whom were not 'barons' or immediate tenants of the Crown; and the class of knights in its turn was identified with the mass of ordinary landholders by the provision by which everybody possessing a certain amount of land, on whatever tenure, was required to assume the obligations of knighthood. Above all, the knights (whether minor barons or not) found their chief sphere of activity in that characteristic English institution, the shire court, to which there is no real parallel in any other country; and in the work of the shire court they mingled on more or less equal terms with the whole body of freemen who were entitled to attend it. So when the English national estates were first summoned, in the thirteenth century, it was not the minor barons who were asked to send representatives, but the shire courts, in which all landholders, however humble, might be present; and the knights of the shire were from the first not representatives of a defined grade in the feudal hierarchy, but representatives of the 'community' of the shire.

Nor were the boroughs sharply defined groups of privileged merchants, as in other countries. The boroughs also shared in the work of the shire court, to which they sent representatives. Most of them were very modest rural market towns, to whose trading rights the neighbouring landholders were very commonly freely admitted. Their principal interest, the wool trade, was one in which the landholding class was equally concerned. And so it came about that there was no sharp distinction between the communities of the shires and the communities of the boroughs; men of the knightly class could naturally be elected as representatives for

the boroughs ; and both groups could take their places side by side in a single House of Communes or Communities. Hence in place of two estates, an estate of minor barons and an estate of privileged merchants, each forming a sharply defined class, England developed a single parliamentary assembly, the members of which were not elected solely by members of their own class, but by the whole ' communities ' of the shire and the borough.

Even in the other estates the same melting down of the lines of division between castes is to be seen. The clerical estate as a whole early ceased to take any part in the national parliament, preferring to maintain its own separate convocation, which dealt only with ecclesiastical affairs ; and although the great churchmen sat in the House of Lords, they sat not solely as churchmen, but largely as landholders. Finally, not even the greatest barons, who enjoyed hereditary seats in the House of Lords, formed a sharply defined caste as in other countries. In France, or Germany, or Italy all the sons of a Count were Counts, all the sons of a Baron Barons. In England the sons of the greatest nobles—even their eldest sons—were regarded by the law as commoners ; the rights of peerage, though hereditary, were purely personal ; younger sons and their descendants ranked with the knightly class, or might even drift into trade. Thus the caste system which grew out of feudalism in other countries never became really established in England ; and this made it possible for the Estates to develop rapidly into a genuine national parliament. The existence of a rigid and firmly established system of castes or classes in a country is, indeed, essentially incompatible with the effective working of popular representative government. It is possible that the caste system of social organisation may be the best

for a given people, as Treitschke argued that it was the best for Germany; but if that is so, and if the people habitually act as if it were so, the possibility of real popular government becomes very slight, for the accepted dominant castes will continue to control all power even if the forms of popular government are established.

A third factor which especially favoured the development of a parliamentary system in England was the fact that throughout the later Middle Ages, when the strong monarchies of other countries were beginning to fight against feudal independence by putting trained administrators in control of local government, the English kings were getting all this work done for nothing by means of the Justices of the Peace, selected from among the country gentlemen. This meant, in the first place, that England was saved from the power of a highly organised and centralised bureaucracy, whose existence elsewhere formed a principal obstacle to the growth of national self-government; it meant, in the second place, that if the central government desired to keep in touch with the needs and conditions of the country, it could best do so through Parliament, whose members were mostly occupied in this kind of work; it meant, in the third place, that the men who came to these parliaments were, in a steadily increasing degree, men of practical experience in government, not likely to be very unreasonable in their demands or claims.

And lastly, England profited immensely from her insular position, which saved her from the constant fear or pressure of foreign attack—always the strongest motive for submission to a centralised autocracy. When the feudal organisation ceased to be used for purposes of national defence—and it broke down earlier in England

than elsewhere—the English kings did not need to resort to the expensive device of maintaining a professional army. From the thirteenth century onwards, they trusted mainly to levies of ordinary freemen, raised by 'commissions of array,' and they found these methods adequate even for the purposes of foreign war. But this meant that they were largely dependent upon the support of the men who raised and led these troops, the country gentlemen. It meant also that, lacking a standing force of professional soldiers, they lacked the means for enforcing their own absolute authority. Without an organised army, and without a centralised bureaucracy, they had no alternative but to take the nation into partnership; and on the whole the politically active part of the nation, the country gentlemen, were, thanks to their experience of local administration, not incapable of playing their part in this partnership, especially in the happy freedom of England from foreign danger.

For these reasons the English, alone among European peoples, developed a real parliamentary system out of the institution of Estates, a parliamentary system which was at once national and reasonably efficient in character. Perhaps the nearest parallel to this English system was that of Hungary. But the Hungarian parliament was in fact a purely class assembly. It represented only the clearly defined caste of the nobles, whose numbers had risen to about two hundred thousand in the early nineteenth century, but who could in no sense speak even for the whole Magyar people, and still less for their subjects of other races. The history of self-government on the national scale has therefore been, throughout the greater part of the modern age, practically the history of English institutions.

III

BRITISH SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE MODERN AGE

When the modern age opened, towards the end of the fifteenth century, the centralised monarchies of most of the European countries had reduced the feudal estates to a shadow and a form ; and despotism, supported by military strength and working through trained officials or 'bureaucrats,' had become the almost universally accepted form of government. The existence of a primitive democratic system in the rural simplicity of some of the Swiss cantons was too isolated a phenomenon to count for anything. A few independent city-states survived in Germany and Italy. But they had fallen under the control of oligarchies of merchants, frequently in conflict with the mass of their subjects, and cannot be said to have contributed anything to the growth of self-government. Their autonomy was indeed a barrier to the greater unity of the nation, and it was only in the completely disorganised nations of Germany and Italy that they survived : wherever the national idea was triumphant, the towns were inevitably reduced to submission. Absolute monarchy had become the recognised mode of government in the world of Western civilisation, and during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries it everywhere steadily strengthened its authority, forcing to obedience every element in the

state which could claim any independence, and enlarging the powers of its bureaucratic officials. For centralised monarchy gave unity, order, strength, and efficiency to the new great states with whom the destiny of Europe now lay. Even in England something approaching to absolute monarchy in the direction of national affairs was willingly accepted by the nation after the turmoil of the Wars of the Roses; and we are accustomed to give the name of 'the Tudor despotism' to the system of government which carried England through the critical period of the sixteenth century.

Nevertheless the phrase 'despotism' is a misnomer for this system, and it is no paradox to say that England was, under the Tudor monarchy, the only self-governing country in the world. It is true that Henry VIII. and Elizabeth directed national policy practically without parliamentary interference. But this was because the nation very fully trusted them, and because Parliament, which continued to meet and to approve all legislative and taxative proposals, did not feel itself competent to deal with the 'mysteries of statecraft,' with the problems of foreign policy or of ecclesiastical organisation. The Tudor monarchy rested upon consent as fully as any government that has ever existed; it possessed, and it needed, no standing military force to impose its will; it worked, for the most part, through Parliament, and if Tudor Parliaments were 'subservient,' this was because the sovereigns studied popular sentiment, and were careful not to lose touch with it. On the rare occasions when they did lose touch, they found Parliament no longer submissive, but they had the art of yielding gracefully without appearing to be defeated.

Moreover, in almost everything except the direction

of national policy, the England of the Tudors was in a quite remarkable degree a self-governing country. In the first place, the Rule of Law was well established. With rare exceptions no Englishman could be attacked in his life, liberty, or property otherwise than by process of law, and purely arbitrary authority was almost non-existent ; the officers of state were not above the ordinary law of the land, but were liable to be prosecuted in the ordinary courts for any illegal action ; and the enforcement of the law in detail rested largely in the hands of ordinary citizens—of unpaid country gentlemen or burghers acting as Justices of the Peace, of Juries of plain men whose verdict on the facts of a case was final, of unpaid village and hundred officers, bailiffs and constables, commonly chosen by their fellows. Not only the administration of justice but the control of the daily routine of government was in the hands of the people themselves. The mandates of the central government were addressed not, as in France, to a single paid professional administrator in each district, but to a group of unsalaried country gentlemen, the Justices of the Peace, whose houses and lands lay in the region which they administered, and who were the natural leaders of its society. It was the manifold experience in the business of government which the country gentlemen thus obtained which rendered possible their activity in national affairs during the next age, and explained the eminently practical forms which this activity assumed.

Nor were the country gentlemen the only class habituated to co-operation in the management of common affairs. More than two hundred English boroughs enjoyed, in their Town Councils and their Assemblies

of Freemen, a quite remarkable degree of local autonomy. Craftsmen still combined to regulate their trades in common in their gilds. Wherever the old open-field system survived (and it survived over more than half of England) the body of villagers, now all freemen subject to no real feudal ascendancy, combined to manage the co-operative agriculture of the village community, and to elect their reeves, haywards, moss-reeves, chimney-peepers, and so forth. In every parish the community was wont to meet at Easter to deal with a variety of common business, relating not only to the church, but to many other matters, such as parish charities, or the state of the local roads; and when the great responsibility of relieving the poor was thrown upon the parishes, it was naturally and easily administered in detail by the more substantial yeomen, who were elected by the Vestry to serve without pay as overseers and churchwardens, and levied and spent the poor-rate under the supervision of the Justices of the Peace. In no country of Europe, at that time or at any other time, has the practice of self-government by means of discussion and agreement among ordinary citizens been more widespread; in no country therefore had self-government become so ingrained a habit and instinct as it was in England. National affairs—foreign policy, church policy, defence, the regulation of foreign trade—the nation was very willing to leave in the hands of the king and his councillors, because it knew that it had an insufficient knowledge of these matters. But they were left to the king only so long as he possessed the trust of the nation, and particularly of its politically active element, the landed gentry. Here is the first and most notable feature of the development of popular

government on the national scale in England : that it arose among a people already habituated through centuries to co-operation in the management of common affairs, already accustomed to the compromises and rough working arrangements which such co-operation renders necessary ; a people, therefore, not likely to be easily carried captive by sweeping theories, but always governed by considerations of immediate practical convenience.

In the seventeenth century, while despotism was establishing itself more and more fully in all the continental states, two remarkable developments illustrated and deepened the English passion for self-government.

In the first place, the English, like the other peoples of western Europe, began to plant settlements in the new worlds disclosed by the great explorations. But, unlike the colonial ventures of Spain, Portugal, France and Holland, the new English settlements were not created by the purposive action of the national government ; they sprang from the activity of spontaneously formed groups, often quite unsupported, and sometimes even discouraged, by government.[1] Wherever the Englishman went, to the empty lands of North America or to the slave-worked plantations of the West Indies, he carried with him his ingrained habit of self-government ; he set up, as a matter of course, representative institutions to manage local affairs, though he still remained content that the home authorities should retain responsibility for foreign affairs, defence, and trade regulation. And the royal government at home—those very Stuart princes who have been represented as striving after absolute power—regarded these proceed-

[1] On early colonial self-government see *The Expansion of Europe*, chap. III.

ings as entirely natural and proper, and never dreamt of placing restrictions upon them. Every English colony was self-governing from the first. No colony planted by any other European country ever received self-governing powers, not even those of the Dutch republicans. Nothing could more clearly show how deep-rooted was this English habit of self-government. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, apart from the Dutch and Swiss republics, the British lands were the only self-governing communities in the world. And self-government proved, in these new lands, to be an eminently satisfactory device. The superior prosperity of the British colonies is unquestionably to be attributed largely to their self-governing institutions.

The second great development of the seventeenth century was that Parliament formally claimed to exercise a general control over national policy, such as it had never attempted in the sixteenth century; and after long disputations, a civil war, and two revolutions, succeeded in establishing its claim. It was essentially the landowning class who exercised the supremacy thus won for Parliament. The great landowners filled the House of Lords; their sons, and the lesser landowners, formed a majority of the House of Commons, representing not only county but borough constituencies; and the only other substantial elements of the nation who took part were the lawyers, mainly themselves belonging to the landowning class, and some of the small class of rich foreign merchants, who may be said to have been taken effectively into partnership in national government towards the end of the seventeenth century. Though few in numbers, this class exercised a powerful influence through its control over great corporations

like the East India Company and the Bank of England. In the management of these great concerns they had proved their capacity for governmental work, and they had special weight in determining the commercial and the foreign policy of the country during the eighteenth century.

But essentially the supremacy of Parliament meant the supremacy of the landowning class, which lasted unshaken down to 1832. Hence the government of this period is sometimes spoken of as a 'landowning oligarchy.' But the phrase is as misleading as the phrase 'Tudor despotism.' As truly as the Tudor monarchy in the sixteenth century, the landowning aristocracy of the eighteenth century ruled Britain by consent. Britain was still predominantly an agricultural country, and a very large proportion of its population still possessed, until nearly the end of the eighteenth century, some proprietary interest in the soil which they cultivated. There was no legally recognised caste distinction separating the politically dominant class from the rest; the grades of rural society, the magnates and the squirearchy, the yeomanry and the peasantry, all free and equal before the law, shaded insensibly into one another, and there was no such obvious clash of economic interest between them as came about later, when the ownership of all the land fell into a few hands, when the peasantry became landless wage-earners, and the old independent yeomanry were merged in the class of farmers renting their land. In such a society the substantial landowners were the natural leaders, and it was for this reason that members of this class were elected as a matter of course for the county constituencies, and were able to establish a controlling influence over the

elections in the little rural market towns. Normally their ascendancy was undisturbed, though in a time of excitement, as in the election of 1784, the electors woke up to the exercise of their powers. The ascendancy of the landowning class, therefore, does not mean that England was a less self-governing country than she had been; on the contrary, she was more so. The old machinery of local self-government went on more actively than ever, and it was now less closely controlled by the central government than it had been under the Tudors and Stuarts. One of the most interesting features of this period was the spontaneous development, especially in many of the large boroughs, of new machinery for the management of local affairs, created and worked by the townsmen themselves.

When the supremacy of Parliament in the English system of government was established by the Revolution of 1689, it was not the intention of the leaders of the Revolution that Parliament should itself assume direct control over the executive government, or exercise the right of appointing or dismissing ministers. They intended to keep the two spheres of the executive and the legislature quite distinct. In the Act of Settlement they even provided that no paid servant of the Crown, that is to say, no minister of state, should be a member of the House of Commons, their fear being that the Crown might obtain an illicit control over Parliament by filling the House with placemen. Over the general policy of the executive they could be sure of exercising control. In the first place, they had the power of withholding supplies, and therefore of making impossible the continuance of any government of which they disapproved. In the second place, by the simple device of

making the Mutiny Act annual, they brought the small standing army, which was now seen to be necessary, under their control. 'The question by which to decide the essential character of a state,' says the Prussian Professor Delbrück, with penetrating shrewdness, 'is the question, Whom does the army obey?' From the Revolution of 1689 onwards the English army ultimately obeyed, and depended upon, Parliament. But though the leaders of the Revolution had thus shrewedly ensured the ultimate sovereignty of Parliament over national policy, in the detailed carrying out of this policy they did not intend to meddle, but to leave it to the king and his chosen ministers. Their only regular method of calling ministers to account was the cumbrous method of Impeachment. In short, they adhered to the theory of 'division of powers,' the theory that legislature and executive should be generally independent of one another, each in its defined sphere. And in theory this continued to be the law of the constitution throughout the eighteenth century: it is so, in strict law, even to-day. Montesquieu found in the British system the best illustration of his doctrine that 'division of powers' is the greatest safeguard of liberty; and the makers of the American constitution, when they incorporated this principle in their system, believed that they were following the British model.

In fact, however, Parliament assumed the most direct control over the executive government, and the exercise of this control came to be its most prominent feature. The way in which this was brought about forms one of the most curious features of British constitutional development. The English governing class was divided into two acutely hostile parties. One of these, the

Whigs, who were probably the weaker in numbers, but much the stronger in wealth and influence, constituted themselves the special guardians of the Revolution Settlement, which they regarded as their own work; and in order to ensure it against destruction, they skilfully secured to themselves a complete control over the instruments of government. By all kinds of methods, corrupt and otherwise, they obtained a steady majority in the House of Commons; the House of Lords they already controlled; and, persuading the helpless and puzzled German kings that they were their only friends, they took possession also of all the powers and patronage of the Crown. Almost disregarding the king, they settled all matters of public policy in a secret conclave or Cabinet Council of their own leaders; and they ensured their position by cultivating and nursing the House of Commons. The management of Parliament became one of the principal functions of ministers, and so the practice grew up that the leading ministers of state *must* be members of one or other house of Parliament; the prohibition of the Act of Settlement having previously been got rid of, before it came into operation, by an Act of 1707.

Thus it was the political necessities of an oligarchic clique which led to the creation of the most distinctive and peculiar feature of British parliamentary government: the centralised control of executive government by a compact cabinet of ministers, and the dependence of this cabinet upon a party majority in the House of Commons. Devised for an immediate purpose, this system—which no political philosopher could ever have deliberately invented—was proved by experience to be eminently workable. It brought the executive under

the effective control of Parliament, laid ministers open to daily and searching parliamentary criticism, and ultimately established the usage that they must resign as soon as they no longer possessed the support of a parliamentary majority. At the same time it ensured coherence and stability in the conduct of government, because the Cabinet could nearly always depend upon the support of its followers, so long as it was careful to avoid measures likely to offend them; and coherence and stability are just the qualities which it would seem all but impossible to secure under the control of two large, unwieldy, and shifting assemblies.

Ever since its first development, the party-cabinet system of government has been at intervals the object of bitter criticism. In its eighteenth-century form it was very effectively attacked in Bolingbroke's *Patriot King*. George III., largely inspired by Bolingbroke's ideas, resolved to destroy the influence of party, and to restore the crown to the position intended for it by the authors of the Revolution Settlement—the position of an impartial arbiter calling to the direction of national affairs the best available men from all sides. He succeeded in breaking up the old Whig party. With the aid of the elder Pitt, he succeeded in 1766 in forming a non-party ministry, which included many of the ablest men then engaged in politics. The result was a period of the worst humiliation and disaster that England has ever known; and, beyond a doubt, the main reason for these misfortunes was that the direction of affairs was in the hands of a group of men who had no principles in common and no habitude of working together. In the end, after America had been lost, the party-cabinet system was restored finally in 1784, and it has remained

the main motive force in British politics ever since. Indeed, it seems to form the only system whereby parliamentary control of the executive can be made effective. It has been adopted in all the British colonies, and, to a greater or less degree, in most of the continental states. There are only two alternatives to it. One is that of a coalition of shifting groups, which involves log-rolling and corruption. The other is the rigid 'division of powers,' and the freeing of the executive from parliamentary control; but even this system, as the case of America shows, will normally pass under the sway of party division where the electorate directly appoints the head of the executive in place of Parliament, and it is only where the executive is largely independent of all public control, as in Germany, that the dominance of party can be restrained.

We have spent, perhaps, an unduly large amount of space in tracing in outline the growth of the British system. Yet before the outbreak of the American and the French Revolutions, the history of the British system (at home or in the daughter-lands) is in effect the history of self-government in the world. We have seen that this system was the result of a slow growth, never the product of theory or deliberate invention. It derived its strength from the fact that self-government in the lesser sphere of local affairs had become a deeply rooted instinct and habit of the whole nation; yet the whole nation did not share in the direct control of national affairs during the pre-revolutionary period, but was content to leave it in the hands of those classes in the population who had the most direct and varied experience of public affairs, the landed gentry, the lawyers, and the great foreign merchants. But we have seen

also that this was possible because that governing class did, in the pre-revolutionary period, genuinely represent the interests and ideas of the nation as a whole, so far as these were vocal; and was, in spite of the corruption of the electoral machinery, in a real degree in contact with popular opinion.

While the mechanism of parliamentary government was being invented in England, on the continent of Europe despotism had everywhere reached its apogee. The splendour of Louis XIV. in France had been followed by the feebleness and corruption of Louis XV. Yet in spite of this, most of the political thinkers who distinguished this age pinned their faith to absolute monarchy, believing that it was only from an enlightened monarch that the resolute pursuit of great reforms could be expected. And the preaching of the philosophers produced, in a most remarkable way, a generation of philosopher-kings. Nearly every European state was governed, in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, by a ruling prince or a minister who showed a genuine enthusiasm for reform; and it must be admitted that the country gentlemen of England, arguing about Middlesex elections and duties on tea, present, on the surface, a very poor contrast to the strenuous reforming labours of a Leopold of Tuscany, a Joseph II., a Frederick the Great. It is not surprising that to that generation, in view of the achievements of these rulers, it appeared that the future belonged to enlightened despotism served by highly trained and devoted bureaucrats. Government by discussion seemed to lead to mere chaos; to be ruled by the stupidity of average men seemed mere folly. It was her attachment to her fatal 'liberties' that had brought ruin on Poland; and England, with

her unceasing party wranglings, amid which no work was done, seemed to Frederick the Great to be 'a sort of island Poland.' Certainly England saw no such fever of constructive work as was going on in many continental states during these years. Unfortunately very little of all this work had any permanent effect; and the reason for its failure was simply that the Benevolent Despots wholly disregarded the sentiments and desires of their subjects.

'I am the first servant of my people,' said Frederick the Great; if so, he was a servant of the old-fashioned type that knows far better than his masters what is good for them, and insists upon their having it, whether they like it or not. But in truth Frederick's famous phrase does not really describe his own view of the royal function. He and the other Benevolent Despots laboured, indeed, untiringly to improve their dominions: they fostered agriculture and industry, they created academies of science, they revised and codified the laws, they carried out great public works. But they were labouring—or at any rate Frederick was labouring—not so much for the welfare of his own subjects as for the creation of a powerful State. He was the architect of the future Great State, his subjects only the bricks and mortar. It was necessary that they should be numerous, so as to fill the ranks of a conquering army, and prosperous, so as to support its burden; it was important that the Great State should be fully equipped with all the resources of modern knowledge, both for practical purposes and for prestige. But the State did not exist for the sake of the people; the people existed for the sake of the State. They must not presume to form opinions and preferences of their own; it was theirs

to be used by the King-Architect for such purposes and according to such plans as he might desire. Let them be educated; they will be more useful so; but let their education impress upon them the duty of obedience, and the privilege of being a Great King's implements in the building of a Great State. For the State is omnipotent; the people only the clay out of which it is formed. Such was the real conception of Enlightened Despotism and its aims, at the moment when it reached its highest development, on the eve of the French Revolution. It was nowhere more clearly grasped, or more efficiently put into operation, than by Frederick of Prussia (1740-1786).

Now this conception of the meaning and aims of the State was fundamentally the opposite of the conception implied in the system of self-government which the English had been slowly, and more or less instinctively, working out during these last centuries. The average Englishman, and even the ablest of politicians, did not trouble much about theories. But if you had asked an eighteenth-century Englishman what was the function of the State, he would assuredly have answered, that its chief end was to protect the liberties which his ancestors had acquired for him, to ensure him freedom to think and say and do whatever he liked, so long as he did not injure his neighbours; and this freedom he certainly possessed in a greater degree than the citizens of any other European state. He would have told you (had he ever thought about such matters) that the State was simply the machinery whereby the people contrived to manage in common and by mutual agreement all those matters which required such determination. He would have said that the less the State meddled with

him and controlled his actions, the better. He might have added that the fact of partnership in the management of common affairs, and the sense of joint responsibility, was something almost essential to the realisation of his own manhood. He would not as yet have risen to the idea of the State as a great partnership of the community for the sake of making the best of life, for this conception did not come to birth until the next century. But if you had invited his assent to the Prussian doctrine that the State is everything, and the individual nothing, that the citizen has no rights at all against the State, and that it is his highest glory to be used for the increase of the State's greatness, he would have repudiated your suggestion with laughter, telling you that he was not a slave, that the essence of the State was Law, and that the purpose of Law was to protect him and his fellows in the enjoyment of their rights and liberties, the rights and the liberties that made it a glorious thing to be an Englishman.

Perhaps we have put our eighteenth-century Englishman's statement a little more definitely, and in a rather more modern form, than he would himself have put it. But our object has been to bring out in a simple way the antithesis between the two ideas of the state which had resulted from the slow development of centuries in England and on the continent of Europe, and which already stood forth in pretty clear contrast before the outbreak of the American and the French Revolutions. But already these tremendous upheavals were preparing ; and with their trumpet-like proclamation of the sweeping and uncompromising doctrines of Liberty, a new era in the history of self-government began.

IV

THE ERA OF REVOLUTION AND THE DOGMAS OF LIBERTY

THREE nations—the British, the American, and the French—have mainly contributed to the establishment of national self-government as a vital element in the life of Western civilisation. The contribution of Britain was the gradual development of the machinery of self-government, and of the social habits which made the working of that machinery possible. But this British achievement was never regarded by its half-conscious creators as a model for the rest of the world, or as the expression of doctrines of universal application. Rather it was regarded as something peculiarly British, as an inherited national privilege. This notion of inheritance was indeed a fundamental element in most British political thought before the nineteenth century. It was expounded with a sort of mystical fervour by Burke. Far from contending that the British system was one which other nations would be wise to imitate, Burke went to the opposite extreme, and almost maintained that political liberty could scarcely exist in any nation which had not inherited it; and his advice to the French was that they should make the best of their own inherited traditions, and avoid the blunder of striving after a theoretical ideal. This irritating and peculiarly British attitude was maintained far into the period

when parliamentary institutions were becoming common among the Western peoples. It is implicit in Bagehot's able but self-complacent analysis of the working of the British system, published as late as 1868. A system so peculiarly national, so little based upon theories of right, could scarcely have aroused the enthusiasm of other peoples, though it might have awakened their envy ; and the universal Western movement towards national self-government might never have taken place, and would certainly never have been capable of arousing the passionate hope and faith which it enlisted in the nineteenth century, if an impetus of a wholly different character had not been given to it, first by the distant spectacle of the American Revolution, and then, far more directly, by the revolutionary ardour of the French people. No doubt both of these great events derived their character in part from British influences : the Americans, when they declared their independence, were only carrying to a logical conclusion the principles they had learnt from their British ancestors ; and most of the philosophers whose work determined the character of the French Revolution had based their theories largely upon the study of the British system. But America and France introduced new contributions of their own, of such importance as to make this age of revolutions a new starting-point in human history.

The American Revolution [1] forms in some sense a transition between the practical unidealist growth of British institutions and the glorious impracticable dreams of the French apostles of liberty. On the one hand, it was based upon tradition. The American colonists had

[1] Other aspects of the American Revolution are discussed in *The Expansion of Europe*, chap. IV.

enjoyed self-government on a generous scale from the very first; they possessed the habit and the instinct of self-government—it was the most precious thing they brought from Britain; they fought not as slaves striving after liberty, but as free men who had already practised it and were resolved to achieve its fulfilment; and they argued their case precisely in the same temper as the Englishmen of the seventeenth century, basing their claims upon law, precedent, and inherited rights. The institutions which they set up were, for the most part, no new-fangled experiments; in all their main features they were based upon their own experience and upon that of the Motherland, and where they blundered it was through misinterpreting this experience, or stepping aside from the path of precedent.

On the other hand, owing to the conditions of a new land, they had been from the first far more democratic than it was possible for the mother country to be, with all her load of tradition and custom. The American colonists were, indeed, before the actual breach, already the only fully democratic communities in the modern world; and they seemed to embody and to justify in practice all the democratic theories that were in that generation fermenting in the mind of Europe. When they had won their independence, and wrought out their new system of government, they stood before the world as the first completely free and democratic nation-state which had ever existed in human history. Naturally they welcomed and adopted the phrases of the philosophers which seemed so directly to refer to their own circumstances, and incorporated them in the primary documents of their new state. And having done so, they became doctrinaires of liberty, like the French, as

well as habitual practitioners of it, like the British. Moreover, their success seemed to demonstrate the truth of the democratic doctrine, which had, as yet, been nowhere else put in operation. For here was a society where all men were free and all equal; and in this society there was almost no poverty, and no great wealth, but an extraordinary diffusion of prosperity. The prosperity, of course, came from the virgin wealth and the inexhaustible spaces of a new world; the social equality was mainly due to the same cause; the political liberty was an inherited gift, rendered habitual by long practice. But it was natural that both the Americans themselves and their European admirers should attribute their well-being wholly to their freedom, and date their freedom from their revolt against George III. Thus the success of the great American experiment contributed to establish the theory that all that was necessary for the realisation of human felicity was to set up the institutions of democratic self-government, without regard to the questions whether the people for whom they were created had obtained the training which would enable them to use them well, or whether they were sufficiently united to co-operate easily in the work of government by discussion.

Yet the experience of the Americans themselves threw a most instructive light upon the importance of these conditions for the working of self-government. The general standard of education among them was probably higher than in any country save Scotland; they had been habituated to self-government since the beginning of their history, and thus enjoyed, in respect to training, advantages which were not likely to be equalled in any other country. They were also linked by many

unifying forces. They were mostly descended from the same stocks; they spoke the same language and read the same books; they were dominated by the same moral ideas, and accustomed to work the same civil institutions; and they had faced in common the same dangers. Yet because they had long been organised in thirteen distinct states, each jealous of its independent rights, they found it extremely difficult to come to an agreement as to the form and powers of their common government; and after their independence had been secured, five years of argument passed before they were able to establish their federal system. When it was completed this system was marked by certain features which must have made it unworkable among any people who did not possess an inexhaustible fund of political capacity, public spirit, and good sense; perhaps even these qualities would not have saved it if America had not been preserved by her geographical position from all serious danger of foreign complications.

In the first place, because of the jealousies of the thirteen states, the federal constitution ultimately had to take the form of a sort of treaty between these states, which could not be varied in any particular without the consent of large majorities in at least two-thirds of the states. This meant that the constitution was practically unalterable; and the new republic started with the most rigid and inelastic constitution which has ever existed in the world. The constitution was in itself a wise and generous document. But not the wisest and most far-seeing of men could anticipate all the problems of the future. A single instance may suffice to illustrate the effects of this rigidity. The constitution provided (in what seemed an unexceptionable clause, based upon

Magna Charta) that no citizen might be deprived of his property otherwise than by process of law. The time came when the government of the United States decided that it was necessary to levy an income tax. But to levy an income tax is, in fact, to take a part of every taxable citizen's property ; and the Act of Congress by which the tax was imposed could not be described as a process of law. So the Supreme Court held that the constitution forbade the levying of an income tax. And no income tax could be, or was, levied until two-thirds of the separate states had decided by majorities of three to one to accept an alteration of the constitution for this purpose ! Naturally, such an agreement was very difficult to attain, and the levying of income tax was postponed for years. There could be no more pointed illustration of the danger of laying down unalterable rules for the future, and of the snares that beset men when they try to manufacture a system of government for a living and growing society.

Again, the mutual jealousy of the states (which is another way of saying the incomplete unity of sentiment in the nation) necessitated a strict definition of the spheres of the federal and the state governments. Broadly speaking, certain general functions were allotted to the central government, but all the undefined residue of power remained with the states. This meant that common action for the whole nation was made extremely difficult in every sphere which was not actually foreseen by the framers of the constitution. They could not foresee the complex economic system of the twentieth century, or the vast power which was to fall into the hands of organised finance. But, as we to-day realise, these things demand a firm control by the organs of

state. And America has found herself seriously handicapped in establishing this control by the inelastic provisions of her eighteenth-century constitution. The abounding prosperity of the country has made these defects less apparent than they would have been in an older society; the ingenuity, good sense, and moderation of the American mind have found ways of partially escaping from the difficulty. But it remains true that the constitutional restrictions upon the power of the nation as a whole to deal with its problems on a national scale have created difficulties in the past, and are likely to lead to greater difficulties in the future.

Finally, dominated by the distrust of 'government' as such which was characteristic of eighteenth-century thought, and deeply influenced by the political theorists of France, especially Montesquieu, the framers of the American constitution endeavoured to draw a sharp distinction between the main departments of government—the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary,—and to secure to each independence within its own sphere. This was in accordance with the theory of Montesquieu (based upon a misreading of the British system) that in such a 'division of powers' is to be found the only effective safeguard of liberty. Hence it was provided that the President, as head of the Executive, should be chosen every four years by an electoral college, whose members should in turn be directly elected by the whole people, and, once elected, the President was to be irremovable during his period of office. The President's powers were modelled on the supposed powers of the Crown in Britain. He was to be responsible for the whole conduct of executive affairs; he was to appoint all executive officers, who were to be responsible solely

to him, and not to the representative body, of which they were not even to be members. While he was forbidden to declare war without the assent of the legislature, he was left free to pursue a policy which would make war inevitable; and when war once began he was endowed with practically absolute power over all the forces of the State. This system made it impossible, even in a moment of acute national crisis, to get rid of an unsuitable or incompetent chief, who might have been elected on quite minor issues. It forced the nation to wait for the close of the four years' term to make any change, and then to go through the turmoil of an election in order to make it. And it inevitably weakened criticism during the period of presidential office; because criticism could lead to no practical result, and because there was no means of forcing the executive government to any complete revelation of its programme. Again, the function of making new laws was reserved to the legislature, though the President could veto laws which he disapproved, and the Supreme Court of Justice could make them inoperative by declaring them unconstitutional. This meant that the function of law-making was entrusted to a body which had no responsibility for carrying out the laws which it made, and which was therefore tempted to court popularity by irresponsible legislation; while the executive government, which often alone knows from experience where the shoe pinches, and what practical remedies are likely to be efficient, was in theory debarred from initiating legislative projects. The legislature, like the executive, was irremovable during its term of office; there was no device like that of dissolution in the British system for referring a deadlock to popular decision. Such a system incurred the danger of sharp conflict

between the two separate powers, which might dislocate the national government at the most critical moments: the irremovable President might be unable to get necessary laws passed, or necessary money voted, and he would have no remedy and no appeal; the irremovable Congress might be convinced that the President's policy was ruining the country, but it could do nothing. The truth is, of course, that Montesquieu's plausible doctrine of the division of powers is utterly unsound. The functions of government *cannot* be rigidly divided. The executive is in most cases the best initiator of legislation, because it usually knows best what legislation is needed. But every executive, whether popularly elected or not, needs to be brought under control, and to be subjected to unresting and well-informed criticism. The true function of a representative body is that of control, from which the American Congress was expressly debarred; for while a representative body cannot itself carry on the details of government, it also cannot, as a rule, profitably draft new laws without the guidance of executive experience. Its business ought to be to ensure that the right men are endowed with executive power, that they use it in the right way, that they are encouraged to propose the right kind of legislation, and that all their proposals and those of others are sanely criticised from every point of view before being put into operation. Experience seems to justify us in asserting that it is by the concentration of responsibility for the direction of public affairs under the control and criticism of an active and well-informed body of popular representatives that popular control of government is likely to be most efficiently exercised.

Now the Americans, dominated by abstract theories, had in their federal constitution departed unwittingly

from this principle, and had given their weighty endorsement to the dangerous doctrine of the separation of the executive from the legislature ; a doctrine which, as we shall see, was to work great havoc in the development of self-governing institutions. In practice, however, they very soon, though quite unconsciously, threw this theory overboard, and found a means of at any rate partially reconciling the executive and legislative functions, so far as the constitution allowed. The means by which this was done was the organisation of political parties which rapidly gained control both over the President and over the Congress. Every President became a party nominee, and either dictated his party's programme, or submitted to it, knowing that he could get no support if his party threw him over. Every Congress consisted of declared party men, and thus it was possible for the President, acting through the chief members of his own party in Congress, to get the necessary laws and taxes proposed ; he thus did informally what a British Prime Minister does openly and publicly, and assumed a general responsibility for national policy. But the drawbacks of the system were that the public control and criticism of government could only be made fully effective at intervals of four years, and that, in the intervals, they were exercised not by the open discussions of Congress so much as by the private arrangements of a party machine. This is not a very satisfactory method. Yet it formed the only mode by which the inherent defects of the system of division of powers could be even partially overcome without defying the unalterable constitution. The unqualified dominion of party in America is thus in part due to the defects of the American constitution. The comparative indifference of large sections of the

American public to political issues is largely due to the fact that their activity is (except during elections) unable to effect anything against the irremovable President, the indissoluble Congress, and the irresponsible party organisations that pull the strings behind the scenes.

We have dwelt at some length upon the American system, and even anticipated its later development, because it was the first great experiment in the deliberate organisation of a national system of democratic government, and because its defects, as well as its merits, are full of instruction. In spite of the drawbacks which we have analysed, it did very fully succeed in securing the control of national affairs by the national will; because among an educated, law-abiding, and public-spirited people, long habituated, as the Americans were, to participation in public affairs, and enjoying the most complete freedom of thought, speech, and publication, no President, no Congress, and no party caucus dare venture to override the manifest will of the people. But if these qualities had been lacking, or if America had not been saved from the dangers and complexities of close association with other states, we may well doubt whether the defects of the system would not have produced unhappy results. It was a noble experiment in the organisation of freedom, and a stirring challenge to the old world. But it did not, any more than the British system of the eighteenth century, afford a model which other communities could safely attempt to reproduce. For if the main features of the American system had been imitated in other lands whose citizens were less educated, less habituated to the compromises of public affairs, and less free from foreign dangers, the result must have been mere confusion. The American system,

therefore, while it has afforded a stimulus to the demand for political liberty in other lands, has only in a very slight degree influenced the forms in which this demand has found satisfaction; all the more because America has deliberately and systematically held herself aloof from the concerns of the rest of the world during almost the whole of her history as an independent state.

Although, therefore, the achievements of both Britain and America have contributed indirectly in a very powerful degree to the growth of self-government in the rest of the world, it is in another quarter that we must seek the source of that eager zeal for political liberty which was to captivate and transform Europe during the nineteenth century. It was the French who turned the idea of self-government from a practical device, operative only among those whose history had trained them to use it, into a reasoned belief which could inspire among those who held it the self-sacrificing fervour, and also the ruthlessness, of religious fanaticism.

Prince Bülow, meaning to be contemptuous, has said of the French that this strange people are capable of sacrificing to an idea even their material prosperity. It is a tribute of which the French may well be proud. For throughout their history it has been the secret of the undying fascination and power of this great nation that they have been not only willing to spend themselves for an idea, but able to communicate to other peoples something of their own divine frenzy. They have never done so to greater purpose, or with nobler results, than in the great revolutionary movement which they inspired and guided. It is true that all the blood and fury of these years did not immediately lead to the establishment of an orderly system of national

self-government either in France itself, or in any other state. But they created and spread abroad through Europe the seeds of that divine discontent which was to shake down everywhere the old régime, and to bring about the universal acceptance of the ideal of political liberty; and from that point of view our theme demands that we should dwell for a little, though only in general terms, upon some of the broad features of the great upheaval.

The bankruptcy of the despotic régime in eighteenth-century France was due broadly to three causes: to the degeneration which inevitably overtakes an irresponsible monarchy; to the ruinous privileges of legally recognised castes, which had ceased to be able to render even the services of competent military leadership which they had earlier supplied; and to the growing inefficiency of a once competent but now routine-ridden bureaucracy. The protest against the disorganisation brought about by these causes was expressed mainly by men of letters and philosophers; and for that reason, and also because there seemed to be no vitality in any of the surviving institutions of France, it took the form, not of definite and measurable projects of reform, but, first, of an analysis of the nature and aims of human society at large, and, secondly, of a series of bold and unqualified doctrines, not relating solely to the circumstances of France, but claiming a universal validity.

From the teaching of Rousseau, especially, came the dream and ideal of the democratic state: the assertion of the inherent and inalienable sovereignty of the people, and of the inherent and inalienable Rights of Man. The theory of the equality of men in the state of nature, which Rousseau, like others, borrowed from Grotius and

the Roman jurists, was not for him, as it was for them, simply a convenient juridical formula, nor was it merely a postulate at the basis of a body of artificial theory. For Rousseau, and for his readers, it was a poignant assertion that human societies had gone fatally astray. Organised society exists, according to Rousseau, in order that its members may enjoy in security, to the maximum practicable degree, the rights which in a hypothetical state of nature must always be precarious ; and the essence of these rights is the power to make the best of one's own life on equal terms with other men. But society has been distorted from this, its true end : it has been made the means for the exploitation of the mass of men by the few. 'Men are born equal, and they are everywhere in chains' : nor will they regain their rights, which society theoretically exists to secure, until society has been reconstituted in such a way as genuinely to embody the inexpugnable but disregarded truth of the Sovereignty of the People. 'Government of the people, by the people, for the people,' in Lincoln's phrase, is the only mode by which men can be enabled to live as Nature meant them to, in freedom, equality and brotherhood ; and they are robbed of an essential part of their manhood if they are deprived of their just share in the control of their common destiny.

It is no part of our purpose here to analyse or criticise the doctrines of Rousseau, which, indeed, were much less uncompromising than they were made to appear by many of his disciples. What concerns us is that out of these doctrines could be drawn a political gospel which was full of inspiration, and which seemed to afford the hope of a glowing future for humanity. These ideas worked powerfully upon the mind of a nation that has

always rejoiced in ideas and that had been for centuries cut off from practical contact with politics. And they seemed to be justified in practice in the New World, where Frenchmen, from 1778 to 1782, were helping the revolting American colonists to establish the first complete democracy that ever existed in the world. Liberty, not merely of the half-hearted, traditional British pattern, but on the scale of full-fledged democracy, existed successfully in America, and it seemed to have brought happiness: why should it not exist, and bring happiness, elsewhere?

When in 1789 the French government, on the verge of bankruptcy, resolved in despair to take the people into consultation, and summoned the States-general after an interval of one hundred and seventy-five years, the moment seemed to have come when these aspirations could be realised; and with a sort of sober joy, the whole nation set itself to take full advantage of the opportunity, and to establish in France the reign of Justice and Liberty. In all history there is no moment more touching and more inspiring than this, when nearly all classes and sections of a great people, almost forgetting for the moment their conflicting interests, and all dominated by the same glorious if elusive vision, set to work upon the reconstruction of their social and political system in pursuit of a great ideal. 'Tears of joy flowed from my eyes,' said an unemotional conservative Marquis on the occasion of the meeting of the States-general. 'My God, my country, and my fellow-citizens had become myself.' 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,' the English poet felt; and the thrill of a great emotion passed from France into all the neighbouring lands—into Belgium, into Germany, into Italy, into England,

and made the tinkerings of benevolent despots and of practical politicians appear to be extraordinarily trivial and unreal. Despite the outbursts of turbulence which accompanied the Revolution from the first, this fine emotion lasted in its purity for fully two years. It enabled France to create the first sketch, at any rate, of a State conceived as an embodiment of liberty, fraternity, and equality; and it made upon the hearts and consciences of all Europe an impression which remained indelible, and which not even the horrors of the Reign of Terror, and the militarist frenzy which followed it, were able wholly to obliterate. Shallow and doctrinaire as the theories of the Revolution may appear, the memory of this great national resolve to turn the State into an embodiment of justice, freedom and brotherhood remained, and will perhaps always continue to be, an inspiration to the sons of men; and on the minds of that and the following generations it made an impression far deeper than could have been created by the prosaic spectacle of the practical, unidealist British system.

Three things the leaders of the Revolution set themselves to do. In the first place, they embodied in a great document a declaration of human rights, and of the purposes which the well-ordered State should try to achieve; and this, vague and unpractical as it was, formed a clear challenge to the conscience of civilisation, the echoes of which have not yet died out. It was the first time that the assertion of high moral ideals had been transferred from the philosopher's study to the dusty arena of politics. For Frenchmen in particular, but for the men of many other nations also, these phrases vague and indefinite as they are, have acquired a sort

of sacredness. They have never lost their power. They have, time and again, and to-day more fully than ever, inspired the sons of France to feel that they were striving not after the vulgarity of conquest or wealth, but after an ideal for humanity.

In the second place, the Revolution at a single stroke swept away all privileges of caste and creed and province; and this part of their work was permanent, so far, at any rate, as concerns the embodiment of these privileges in law. The famous session of the National Assembly in which part of this great achievement was effected, amid unrestrained emotion, by the voluntary renunciation of many of the privileged themselves, has sometimes been sneered at; but the sneer is an unworthy one.

Finally, the Revolution set up a complete system of democratic self-government, conceived in accordance with the ideas of philosophers who had enjoyed no experience in practical affairs. Not only was France henceforward to be equipped with a legislature expressing the sovereignty of the people, but in every department also, and in every one of the forty thousand communes or townships of the country, fully organised representative government was to take the place of the unqualified bureaucratic control which had hitherto existed. Henceforward almost all officials performing public functions, even the bishops and priests, were to be chosen by the people.

These changes were, of course, far too sudden and sweeping to have any chance of success among a people who had had no training whatever in the difficult art of managing common affairs by discussion and agreement. The immediate result was chaotic disorganisation; and when the monarchs of Europe, alarmed at the growing

unrest among their own subjects, began to take up arms against the Revolution, the new-made institutions of self-government simply had to be swept aside. The management of local affairs passed once more into the hands of autocrats directed from Paris; the control of national policy into the hands first of the Committee of Public Safety, later of the Directorate, then of the Consulate, finally of the Emperor; and the representative bodies which were still permitted to survive alongside of these controlling powers became weaker and weaker as time went on. Thus the Revolution failed to establish an organised control of the instruments of government by a body representative of the nation. Yet the fervour of belief in the democratic idea never died out. It seemed to be only the pressure of war which had rendered necessary the temporary supersession of the institutions of liberty. But the essential boon of equality before the law survived, even if the forms of self-government were weakened. The electrifying power of liberty was demonstrated by the extraordinary outburst of patriotic fervour which enabled France in 1793 to thrust back her invading enemies on all sides, and to pursue them into their own territories, where their subjects were eager to welcome the emancipators. France, feeling herself the chosen champion of Liberty, proclaimed a great crusade on behalf of all peoples and against all kings, and the ideal of self-government became—what it had never been in its British or even in its American form—a challenge to every constituted government which did not recognise and embody the sovereignty of the people.

Even when, under Napoleon, France had become a conquering militarist empire, imposing its yoke upon

half Europe, this apostolic fervour did not disappear. Even Napoleon brought to the lands he conquered the incalculable boon of equal and rational laws, based upon a disregard of the distinctions of caste. And Napoleon's soldiers and his agents were still the apostles of the democratic idea. Wherever they went they left behind them the seeds of liberty, and even their enemies in the field borrowed their political ideas. Napoleon overran Spain in 1808, and the Spaniards resisted him with British aid. Yet when, after four years of unceasing war against the French, these same Spanish patriots set up a new constitution in 1812, they followed a French, not a British model, and reproduced the great Revolutionary Constitution of 1791. Napoleon subjugated the greater part of Germany, and provoked against himself the great national rising of 1813; but the first demand of the German patriots was for the institutions of self-government, for which France had made them yearn, and they forced the King of Prussia himself to promise them a constitution. Even the Tsar of all the Russias was for a time indoctrinated with liberal ideas. His inspiration came from France, not from Britain, for it was not the practical convenience, but the moral rightness, of self-government that appealed to him. Everywhere in Europe the new gospel of Liberty became an inspiring ideal, which took possession of the minds of the rising generation; and although the actual period of the revolutionary wars did not see the establishment of a single permanent parliamentary system in any European country, the ferment which it created lasted on through the nineteenth century, and formed (along with the nationalist idea) one of the governing factors in the history of that age.

Thus, although the example and influence of Britain and America formed a great incentive, and the model of British institutions was, in the long run, generally imitated, it was the moral fervour that came from France which afforded the main impetus to the universal liberal movement which is the most striking feature of the nineteenth century.

V

THE POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THROUGHOUT the nineteenth century the ferment of the democratic idea was working in all the European countries, with very remarkable results. Every European state was, during this century, compelled to submit to a transformation of its political system, more or less complete; everywhere save in Russia and Turkey the forms of parliamentary government, as they had been worked out in the British communities, were adopted, either as the means of establishing a real popular control over the machinery of government, or as a means of at once veiling and reinforcing the power of the existing ruling elements in the State.

But it would be a profound blunder to trace this vast movement wholly to the inspiration of the doctrines of liberty preached by the French Revolution, or to the practical example afforded by the British system. Although it derived from these sources its form and much of its character, other factors also were powerfully at work.

In the first place, the demand for the institutions of self-government was concurrent with the demand for national unity and freedom, which we have analysed elsewhere [1]; and the interaction of these two movements was close and constant. Sometimes they were

[1] *Nationalism and Internationalism*, pp. 80-105.

mutually hostile. There were cases, as we shall see, in which the enthusiasts for the national idea were distrustful of the democratic idea, or, at any rate, ready to sacrifice political liberty in order to achieve unity; and not infrequently devotees of the democratic idea were, and still are, distrustful of nationalism, because they were tempted to identify it with Chauvinism, and preferred to dream of and work for a combined revolt of all the oppressed in all lands, in a common spirit of brotherhood. But for the most part the two causes were identified in the minds of their advocates; the most fervent democrats were also nationalists, and the most fervent nationalists, like Mazzini, aimed at establishing democratic government in the reunited nation-states which they laboured to create. And beyond a doubt the identification of the two causes was sound. The highest degree of national unity is only attained when the whole community is conscious of its partnership in the common interest, as it can only be when all its members take a part in determining it. On the other hand, as we have already seen, self-government only becomes practicable in a community whose members are linked by a real unity of sentiment such as the national spirit creates. There must be a 'general will' for co-operation before co-operation becomes possible, and the 'general will' melts away unless it is founded upon mutual sympathy and common traditions and modes of life. The immense vigour of the nationalist movement during the nineteenth century has therefore been one of the main causes of the rapid extension of self-governing institutions; and it is no mere coincidence that the period of nationalist victories, 1859-78, was also the period of the greatest successes of Liberalism.

But an even more potent factor in the creation of the great political revolution was the economic and social transformation which passed over Europe during this age. The Industrial Revolution, which had begun in Britain in the late eighteenth century, was rapidly extended to Europe during the generations following the fall of Napoleon. Its political results were that the main elements of wealth and power no longer remained in the hands of the landholding class which had hitherto been dominant in every European state. New classes—new, at all events, on this scale—came into being : the class of capitalist *entrepreneurs*, who were the organisers of the new industries ; the class of scientifically trained experts, who devised their increasingly elaborate processes ; and the class of wage-earning operatives. The emergence of these classes would in any case have necessitated a reconstruction of the system of government in all the lands wherein they became the dominant factors ; and when they began to organise themselves for common interests, as the first and the third increasingly did, they became formidable forces which no government could disregard. To these classes the theories of political liberty made an irresistible appeal ; and the model of Britain, which was at once the leader of the world in the new industries, the field of the most fruitful experiments in co-operative action among the labouring classes, and the creator of the institutions of national self-government, acquired a steadily increasing influence over the minds of the reformers in other European countries, at any rate during all the earlier part of the period. Again, the needs of the new industries demanded that not only their organisers, but also their rank and file, should be in some degree educated,

and the wide diffusion of popular education in all the industrial countries led to a great increase in the public knowledge of, and interest in, political questions, and made the work of revolutionary propaganda immensely easier. All these causes gave from the first a new force and meaning to the doctrines of political liberty. But they did more than that. They also produced considerable modifications in the definition of what political liberty should mean, and what its results should be. Gradually the ideal of the more enthusiastic reformers came to be not merely the control of the ordinary traditional machinery of government by the public will, but the use of this machinery for new and larger purposes: for nothing less than the reconstruction of the social order. The democratic movement, as the century progressed, became more and more also a social movement, though its social aims were far more vague and controverted than its political aims.

The whole of this vast and complex movement has been from the beginning a European movement; it cannot profitably be dealt with separately as it affects each country, although the conditions and the traditions of various countries profoundly influenced the forms which it assumed. In most countries it has repeatedly led to violent revolutionary upheavals or civil wars, which have in the majority of cases led to no very lasting results. The only states which have been free from such upheavals have been Britain, Norway, Sweden, and Holland; and since in these countries the movement has achieved a success quite as great as that attained anywhere else, it will be instructive to observe, as our inquiry proceeds, what have been the causes of this difference. But these disturbances, and even the

more active agitations which preceded them, were not continuous. They were, in a remarkable way, concentrated into a few short periods of feverish and rapid change, separated by longer periods of comparative calm. The years 1820-23, 1830-33, 1847-50, 1859-78, and 1905-14 include practically all the great organic changes, temporary or permanent, in all the great European states. What is more remarkable, no state was free from political disturbance, not even Britain, during any of these periods. Nothing could more strikingly show that the movement towards popular government, though it has taken different forms and achieved varying degrees of success in various countries, has been a general European movement. Yet it has scarcely at all been studied as a single whole. It is as a single whole that we propose to regard it in this essay.

It will simplify and clarify our treatment of this huge theme if we begin by recognising that it falls into certain clearly marked eras, each distinguished by features of its own. Although, as is always the case, such a demarcation must be more or less arbitrary, and our periods must somewhat overlap, we shall gain more than we lose by the definition.

The first of our eras covers the period from 1815 to about 1855. It is filled with more or less abortive revolutionary movements, inspired at once by liberal and by national ideals. On the liberal side its outstanding feature is the predominance of the primarily political aims of the French Revolution; projects of social reconstruction, though they were emerging, and were towards the end of the period beginning to be rather clamorously advocated, had not yet become the immediate declared aim of the leaders of these movements,

and the main conduct of them was in the hands of the 'intellectuals' and the middle class.

The second era extends from about 1855 to about 1878. The outstanding feature of these years was the remarkable series of nationalist victories which they witnessed, especially in Germany and Italy. The nationalist victories were largely due to the fact that they were organised by established governments which could dispose of large armed forces, and no longer by mere sporadic bands of enthusiasts. In the countries chiefly affected by these movements, governments were able to win the support of all classes by bringing to them the gift of national unity. In all cases they were able to win the backing of the middle class during this period, because these were years when the new industrial order was fixing its grip upon Europe, and the classes which most profited from it were most anxious for firm and efficient rule. Alliance between government and the middle class was, therefore, in all the industrial countries, a feature of this period; and this alliance was secured by the establishment of parliamentary systems which in all these countries the middle class mainly controlled, though in some cases the labouring class also was enfranchised. Hence the period of nationalist victories was also the period of the establishment of constitutional government in all the more developed states of Europe. But a sharp distinction emerged between those states in which the parliamentary system was so devised as not to impair the traditional ascendancy of the older ruling elements, and those states in which it was given a real control over the whole machinery of government. Foremost among the former group stood Germany; foremost among the latter Britain. Meanwhile among important elements of the labouring classes, who in effect

nowhere enjoyed a real share of political power, and everywhere felt that the new industrial régime pressed unfairly upon them, a new turn was being given to the doctrine of democracy by the teaching of various apostles, among whom Karl Marx was the chief. It was not anywhere a formidable factor during the period before 1878, though its strength was growing. But already there was apparent a striking contrast between the forms assumed by this social re-interpretation of the democratic doctrine in the countries where (as in Germany) the parliamentary system was little more than a form, and the countries where (as in Britain) it exercised a genuine supremacy.

The third era, 1878-1900, is distinguished by the relative insignificance of the political changes which took place during its course. It was a period of unexampled advance in industry; a period also during which the non-European world was being very rapidly brought under the dominion of European civilisation,[1] and these developments, together with the growing intensity of rivalry between the chief European states, seemed to engross attention. Nevertheless, though it saw few formal changes in the political systems of the European states, it was a period of high interest and importance, first because of the evidence which it afforded of the working of parliamentary institutions under various conditions, and the ends towards which they were being directed by the forces which controlled them; and, secondly, because of the steady development which went on during these years in the doctrine of social democracy, which in some aspects seemed to challenge the validity of all that had been already achieved.

The last of our eras occupied the full and troubled

[1] These events are surveyed in *The Expansion of Europe.*

years from 1900 to 1914. They are too near us, their passions still too deeply stir us, for it to be possible that we should take a wholly calm and detached view of their events. Yet it must be obvious that the changes which took place during their course were as great and important as those of any of the preceding ages. In the first place, the parliamentary system was adopted, in a more or less incomplete and unsatisfactory form, in the only remaining European states, Russia and Turkey, which had hitherto held aloof from the general movement; while even Persia and China tried to adapt the system, and Egypt and India were full of discontent because it was not extended to them also. In the second place, in those countries in which not merely parliamentary institutions, but parliamentary sovereignty, had been established, the mass of the people began to make its voice effectively heard, and to use its power for social reconstruction; while in the countries in which parliamentary institutions had been used merely as a mask, the difficulty of working them became much greater, and the destructive aspects of the doctrine of social-democracy became more threatening. And, in the third place, everywhere a deep dissatisfaction and discontent with the working of the parliamentary system made itself heard, and the machinery by which it was worked was subjected—perhaps especially in Britain, but also in France and Italy—to an acute and searching criticism. When the Great War began, the whole system was manifestly on its trial; and the Great War itself has led to modifications and experiments of profound significance, some of which will be lasting.

If we would face with intelligence the fascinating political problems which await us during the next generation, we must obtain some clear understanding of

the significance of each of these eras in turn. Only so can we form a fair judgment upon the working of representative government, and upon the difficulties with which it has to contend.

And there is one further generalisation which may usefully be made before we enter upon our survey : one distinction which we shall do well always to hold in mind. Although every European state has, during the nineteenth century, adopted representative institutions, there have been throughout the period two conflicting views as to the part which the representative body should play in the government of the State ; and in the end some nations have adopted the one view, some the other. In the one system, which we may call the British because it has held sway in Britain for more than two centuries, the representative body (however elected) possesses, if it likes to use it, a complete control over all the organs of government, and can determine the spirit and methods in which the powers of the executive are to be exercised. In the other, which we may call the German, because it has been most successfully worked out in Germany, the executive power remains free from the effective control of the representative body, and, being master both of the army and of the professional administrative class, or bureaucracy, can in fact freely determine the direction of national policy. It inevitably does so along lines dictated by the two vital elements upon which it depends, the army and the bureaucracy. The sharp contrast between these two conceptions may be said to have come to its issue in the Great War, which will probably determine which of these two shall survive, though it will also leave to the survivor a complex of problems so difficult as to test all its capacity.

VI

THE ERA OF LIBERAL REVOLUTIONS, 1815-1855

When Europe settled down in 1815 after the revolutionary storm, absolute government of the eighteenth-century pattern was still the rule in the great majority of states. In six states only—Britain, France, the Netherlands, Sweden-and-Norway, Poland, and Switzerland—parliamentary institutions of a more or less effective type survived (in the case of Britain) from the pre-revolutionary age, or had (in the other cases) been newly established or reorganised. But in no one of these cases did the system satisfy the ideals of the reformers.

In Britain the system which had worked reasonably well in the eighteenth century no longer answered to the needs of the community, because the social transformation which was soon to extend its influence over the rest of Europe, had been at work for two generations; and its result had already been to make the old governing class no longer really representative of the nation. The Agrarian Revolution had brought the land into the possession of a greatly reduced number of owners; it had almost destroyed the once numerous class of small proprietors or 'yeomen'; it had substituted for them a greatly increased class of farmers renting their holdings from the great landlords; it had deprived the peasantry as a whole of any interest in the land they tilled, and reduced them to the rank of

mere wage-earners ; and between these classes there was no longer any such identity of interest as had once existed, but rather a sharp conflict. At the same time the Industrial Revolution had destroyed for ever the preponderant weight which had once belonged to the agricultural classes ; it had practically brought into being two classes which, as important elements in the nation, were new factors in English politics ; the class of capitalist manufacturers and *entrepreneurs*, and the class of wage-earning operatives, clustered in vast numbers in the new towns of the Midlands and the North. Upon these classes the prosperity of Britain must in the future mainly depend ; a sane and intelligent handling of their problems was becoming the greatest need of the community. Yet they were in effect unrepresented in the parliament elected on the old anomalous methods. Even in the sphere of local government they had but a small voice. The manufacturers could indeed make themselves heard in the ill-organised governing bodies of the new towns ; but not the operatives. The real control of local government remained in the hands of the land-owning class ; and that training in co-operation and in the management of public affairs in which most elements of the older England had had some share, was in effect denied to the makers of the new industrial England. Even the voluntary co-operation of associations for the safeguarding of their own interests was denied them, for the Anti-Combination Acts, inspired by the terror of secret societies to which the Revolution had given birth, forbade the establishment of trade unions or other such bodies. Manifestly, if the national unity of Britain was not to be undermined or destroyed, it had become necessary to undertake a reconstruction of the political system.

But the traditional ruling class was not unnaturally blind to the necessity, was apt to see in the demands for change evidence of the existence of a dangerous revolutionary spirit, and was therefore tempted to sympathise with the reactionary elements which were at work in Europe during this age. Still, Britain possessed a parliament which, though out of touch with large elements of the nation, did effectively control the conduct of government ; and Britain allowed practically free play to public discussion on political questions through the Press or otherwise.

In France, the restored monarchy of 1814 granted a 'Charter of Liberties' in the hope of gaining the affections of its subjects, and under this charter a parliament after the English model was established. But the representative house was elected on so narrow a franchise that there were only about 200,000 voters in the country ; and its powers were regarded as existing by grant from the Crown, and were very restricted. In particular, it had no control over ministers. France continued to be governed in detail by the highly organised bureaucracy taken over from Napoleon, and no element of popular control was permitted in local affairs, while the right of association was still more jealously regarded than in Britain. Under this system, therefore, France cannot be described as in any real sense a self-governing country. Still, national affairs were publicly debated, and the Press was reasonably free : France, therefore, like Britain, was enviously regarded by other lands.

In Sweden, an old-fashioned diet of four estates claimed legislative powers, but had no control over the executive. In Norway, when the people were in 1814 withdrawn without being consulted from the autocratic government

of the king of Denmark and annexed to Sweden, they set up a very democratic legislature which the Swedish king was forced to recognise; but they were not able to control the ministers whom the Crown appointed. In Poland the Tsar Alexander I., in the first flush of his vague liberal sentiments, set up in 1814 a semblance of a parliamentary system; but from the first it had little power, and was soon swept aside altogether. In the Swiss cantons a great variety of systems prevailed, from the rudimentary democracy of the forest cantons to the oligarchy of Bern; but the practice of Switzerland had practically no influence upon the rest of Europe. Everywhere else despotism prevailed.

At first the Great Powers, whose 'august union' formed the dominating factor in the Europe of 1815, professed a mild willingness to permit the existence of self-governing institutions, provided that they were on the most modest scale. Britain had encouraged the establishment of a representative system in Sicily in 1812, but when the Bourbon king of Sicily regained Naples and the continental part of his kingdom, he was allowed, without protest, to suppress self-government in Sicily. In Spain the leaders of the resistance against Napoleon had set up an extravagantly democratic system in 1812, but it was suppressed by the worthless King Ferdinand when he returned to his throne in 1814; nor did the ignorant and priest-ridden Spanish peasantry show any signs of regret for it. Alexander I. of Russia thought himself a Liberal, but his liberal sentiments very quickly evaporated. Frederick William III. of Prussia had promised a constitution to his subjects in the excitement of 1813, but the promise was never fulfilled. The constitution of the Germanic Federation included a vague clause pro-

mising the establishment of constitutions in the individual states of Germany, and under this clause a few of the South German princes set up shadowy parliamentary systems between 1816 and 1819. But the Diet of the Confederation was made to declare that no constitution was valid unless it was spontaneously granted by the goodwill of the reigning prince; and later it went further, and declared its hostility to all representative institutions. Before long this came to be also the attitude of the majority among the Great Powers. At the Congress of Verona in 1822 they united in declaring their hostility to all representative institutions as the source of revolutionary dangers. Even France joined in this programme of repression. Britain alone protested against it, and broke away from what Canning called 'the conspiracy of monarchs who aspire to bind Europe in chains.' Britain, indeed, despite the timid conservatism of her rulers, seemed to be the only Power with any liberal sympathies during the decade 1820-30; and she was the only state which made any advance towards greater political liberty. She did not, indeed, as yet attempt any large political reconstruction. But she allowed open discussion on the platform and in the Press; and in 1825 she took the noteworthy step of repealing the anti-Combination Acts, and thus permitting the rise of trade unions, by whose means, henceforth, the labouring classes were to be enabled not only to ameliorate their social condition, but to give themselves a valuable training in self-government. These, however, were only beginnings, and elsewhere than in Britain reaction and repression reigned supreme.

In face of these obstacles the demand for self-government, everywhere save in Britain, became a secret and underground movement. Just for that reason it was apt

to assume extravagant forms, and to arouse by its mystery a vague terror among the ruling classes everywhere. It became also cosmopolitan in character, and visionary exiles from all lands gathered especially in London and Paris, where alone they had some security, and which therefore became the centres of their propaganda. But the cosmopolitan conspiracy of freedom assumed no very formidable dimensions until about 1830. In most countries it drew its recruits mainly from among the professional classes. University professors and students (especially in Germany), military officers, lawyers, schoolmasters, and after a time the more educated artisans of the big towns, supplied its chief supporters. They were chiefly concerned in the unrest in Germany from 1816 onwards, which gave to Austria and Prussia the excuse for a rigid censorship of the Press and a close supervision of university teaching, and which persuaded the Diet of the German Confederation to prohibit the establishment of representative institutions. They brought about the revolutions of 1820-21 in Spain, Naples, and Piedmont; but these were so ill-conducted and aimed at such indefinite ends, that they would have collapsed of their own weakness even if the Powers had not intervened to suppress them. The main result of these first abortive attempts was that the Concert of Powers, with the sole exception of Britain, were brought to adopt an attitude of definite hostility to the whole liberal movement, wherever and in whatever form it might show itself.

During the decade 1820-30, indeed, there seemed to be a real danger that the organised power of all the great European states (except Britain) would be used to destroy the institutions of self-government even where

they already existed. It was this which led the British statesman Canning to urge America to join him in a declaration that in the New World, at any rate, the policy of repression should not be allowed to operate. The Monroe Doctrine (1823) was the result ; and Canning's formal recognition of the independence and self-government of the South American Republics (1825), in face of the declared desire of the continental states to restore them to their legitimate master the king of Spain, 'called a new world into existence,' in Canning's famous boast, 'to redress the balance of the old.'

But the European movement towards self-government was too powerful to be repressed even by the 'August Union' of the Great Powers. In 1830 a fresh and more earnest series of revolutionary movements broke out, beginning, as always, in France. They failed completely in Italy, in Germany, and in Poland, where they led only to an era of still more bitter and still more stupid reaction. But they obtained real and solid successes in Britain, in France, and in Belgium. These were, in truth, the first great victories for the cause of self-government during the nineteenth century ; and in these three Western countries effective popular control over government was henceforth solidly established. There is much that is instructive in all these three revolutions, whose main result was the initiation of the experiment of middle-class rule, and it is worth while to analyse their outstanding features.

In Britain alone did the change take place without overt violence, though even in Britain there was a good deal of rioting, and at more than one point during the two years' struggle for the first Reform Act it seemed almost impossible to avoid open fighting. In Belgium

the establishment of a parliamentary system was the result of open rebellion against the subordination to Holland established in 1815; in France it was achieved by fighting at the barricades in Paris.

The Belgian system was much the most liberal yet established anywhere in Europe, since it embodied not only a wide franchise, but the responsibility of ministers to Parliament. It had arisen among a racially disunited people, who had never, in all their history, enjoyed self-government on a wider scale than that of the city, and who were united only in their dislike of Dutch rule. Yet it worked with perfect smoothness from the first; brought peace and growing prosperity; and demonstrated that parliamentary government is a practicable system even where the circumstances do not seem especially to favour it. Though her history as an independent state began with a revolution, Belgium has never again suffered from revolutionary upheavals; she passed through the distressful period 1848-71 without disturbance.

In Britain the main result of the revolution of 1830 was the enfranchisement of the middle class by the Reform Act of 1832. This class had already demonstrated that it possessed the capacity for the management of common affairs by discussion, by the success with which it had organised the new industrial system, by the development (in face of great obstacles and without government assistance) of at any rate a rudimentary system of administration in the mushroom towns which had sprung up in the Midlands and the North, by the creation of churches and schools, and by the origination of an interesting, if modest, intellectual life, which had sprung into being during the previous half-century in

the new centres of population.[1] They showed that they possessed the conservatism characteristic of their class and of their nation by leaving the actual conduct of government in the hands of the old ruling class. There was no dethronement of the landowning aristocracy. The Cabinets of the mid-nineteenth century were as predominantly aristocratic in character as those of the eighteenth. But increasingly the governing ideas of national policy were coloured by the ideas of political and economic liberalism, of which the middle class was at this period the stronghold, in Britain as in other countries ; and the doctrines of the middle-class prophets, Bentham and the Mills, Malthus and Ricardo, more and more determined the action of governments.

This showed itself especially in three ways. A new fiscal policy, the policy of free trade, was adopted and won its definite triumph in 1846. The system of local government, which, like the system of national government had been thrown out of gear by the agrarian and industrial revolutions, was reconstructed by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 and the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 ; and although these Acts were only the beginning of a series of changes carried out in a piecemeal and disconnected way, it is nevertheless true that from 1835 onwards Britain was covered by a network of elected local governing bodies, municipal corporations and boards of guardians, which kept alive and developed that habit of local self-government which has always been one of the outstanding features of British life. There was, for

[1] The Provincial Renascence in England during the period 1780-1830 is a subject to which not enough attention has been directed. It was destroyed largely by the railways, which brought London too near, and by the opening of the Universities to Dissenters. But while it lasted it was full of promise.

a long time to come, no real parallel to this system in other countries, where the effective organs of local administration continued to be controlled by centralised bureaucracies. Lastly, the sincerity with which the ideas of modern liberalism had been adopted by the new ruling classes in Britain was demonstrated, during the period following 1832, by the rapidity with which self-government, on an ampler scale than had ever been allowed to the American Settlements, was granted to the infant colonies of the second British Empire.[1] Even in the difficult conditions of India, the ideal of self-government was during these years proclaimed as the ultimate aim of policy. But the most remarkable illustration of this tendency was afforded by the treatment of Canada after the rebellion of 1837. Within four years full responsible government had been established amongst a people recently simmering with discontent, and self-government was successfully acclaimed as a panacea for the most dangerous of political evils. Thus, although the Act of 1832 was far from establishing in Britain a complete system of democracy, it did securely enthrone once more, after the reaction and disturbance of the revolutionary age, the real conduct of public affairs by discussion and agreement. It admitted to partnership in the responsibility for the national welfare those classes of the community which had trained themselves for the work.

The immense and growing prosperity of Britain in this period, unparalleled in any other country, was, of course, not wholly or mainly due to political causes. But it was partly due to them. The freedom of Britain from the bitterness which marked the public life of most European

[1] See *The Expansion of Europe*, chap. VI., for a fuller analysis of this development.

countries during these years was certainly due to the character of its political system. Britain alone enjoyed freedom of the Press, of association, and of meeting. For that reason the discontents which were felt among her people expressed themselves not in underground conspiracy, which always tends to assume extravagant forms just because it has not to meet free criticism, but in open, healthful, and productive public discussion. For that reason also Britain became the refuge of eager reformers from other countries; so much so that most governments regarded the hospitality which she afforded to political exiles as a grave danger to public order. And for the same reasons, Britain became, more than ever, the envied model of reformers of other lands.

The revolution of 1830 in France was less happy in its results, just because it was not supported by an established tradition and habit of self-government. On the surface, indeed, the changes effected in the two countries seemed singularly alike. In France, as in Britain, the middle class now obtained political power. Moreover, as the new monarchy of the Orleanist branch held the throne (like William III. in 1688) by gift of the representatives of the nation, there could be no more talk of the parliamentary system existing by grace and by the grant of the Crown; no further claim, such as Charles X. had put forward, that the king could override the charter if in his discretion he thought fit to do so. To that extent 1830 may be said definitely to have established the sovereignty of the people in France, as 1688 established it in England. Again, there was a real freedom of parliamentary discussion and debate in the France of Louis Philippe, and a considerable, though not an unqualified, freedom was allowed to the Press. For these reasons the

French system appeared on a casual view to be as genuinely a self-governing system as the British, and its working was followed with an equal envy by the Liberals of Germany and other countries. But it was not so in reality. Not only did the restrictions on the Press, and still more on associations and public meetings, drive the expression of public discontent to seek a vent in underground conspiracy; more important, the control of Parliament over the executive was very far from being effective. Louis Philippe (1830-48) never admitted that he must choose his ministers from among the leaders of the parliamentary majority, and as Parliament was split into many parties, no one of which had a clear majority, he was able in a large degree to evade this necessity. Above all, the real governing power in France still continued to be the Napoleonic bureaucracy, and by its control over the bureaucrats the government was able to influence elections in a way never known in England since the time of George III. and Lord North. Some faint attempts were made to establish the beginnings of local self-government in France during this régime, but they were singularly ineffective, and when the system suddenly fell, in 1848, bureaucratic influence was almost as fully as ever the vital fact in local affairs. For all these reasons, the system of 1830 not merely failed to satisfy the demand for self-governing institutions, but when it came to be overthrown, it fell, not by constitutional means, not as the result of a decision arrived at after open national discussion, but by a violent revolutionary upheaval, which had been steadily brewing during all the eighteen years for which the system lasted.

It is perhaps worthy of note that the systems of these years in Britain and France constitute almost the only

attempts that have ever been made, or probably ever will be made, to place a nation-state under the government of the middle class. There have, of course, been abundant instances in which the actual conduct of government has been mainly in the hands of men belonging to the middle class, while supreme power belonged to classes above or below them ; for the middle class is in all countries the great reservoir of competent, industrious and honest administrators, and from among its members are nearly always drawn the preachers of ideals, whether of aristocracy or of democracy, of divine right or of anarchy. All the governments of to-day are, in fact, mainly worked by middle-class agents, and most of the apostles of revolt are middle class also. But the national systems of the 'thirties are the only important cases in which the middle class as such has obtained sovereign control of the organs of the State. Political philosophers from Aristotle downwards have sung the praises of this class as the ideal repository of power ; and the historian Lecky has ventured to assert that human government has never reached a higher pitch of honesty and ability than it did in France and Britain under this system. In his view humanity, which has been during all the ages labouring after the perfect government, achieved it then for one brief period ; but unhappily it let slip its felicity, and has been sinking deeper into the abyss ever since ! And we may very readily admit that the level of political ability displayed by the parliamentary leaders in France and Britain was uniformly high during this period, and that both countries enjoyed a real prosperity. But the plain fact is that the system lasted only a very short time in both countries. Eighteen years of it (1830-48) were enough to weary France to boredom, and even stolid

Britain stood it for only thirty-five years (1832-67): then the middle class itself abandoned power. Why was this? If moderation, good sense and respectability are the highest qualities a system of government can possess, we may be ready to agree with Lecky that the systems which brought to the forefront such shining examples of these virtues as Sir Robert Peel and M. Guizot attained very nearly to the ideal. But humanity will never be satisfied with these rather stockish and tepid virtues. The greatest defect of the middle class as a class is just its mediocrity. And the swiftly changing world of the nineteenth century demanded above all things courage, imagination, and insight in its rulers—the very qualities in which every middle class is most apt to be deficient. When all is said, the middle class did not and could not fully represent the life and aspirations of the shifting, striving, variegated society of a modern industrial state. It had no such claim to leadership as the landowning class had possessed in the comparatively stable and ordered society of eighteenth-century Britain; on the contrary, it was, by all its habits of mind, almost debarred from any sympathetic understanding of those vast and hitherto dumb elements in the modern state which were now beginning to struggle towards a clearer sense of their needs and claims, and were dimly forming the aspiration after a fuller citizenship. These needs and claims and aspirations of the dumb mass had to be somehow interpreted and satisfied, if the ideal of liberty was to be realised in any generous sense. To the average mind of the middle class they provided food only for distrust and trepidation, not for sympathy. That is why, in the continental states especially, hatred of the *bourgeoisie* became, among the labouring classes, a far

more active sentiment than hatred of the aristocracy had ever been. That is why, also, the government of the middle class could not last. It lasted in Britain long enough to achieve a good deal of good work, and long enough to give time for the classes beneath it to train themselves in the practice of self-government and in political responsibility. It was overthrown in France suddenly and easily, with a swift gesture of weariness, before the masses of the nation were ready to take on the task of government; and France suffered, as we shall see, a heavy penalty for its premature failure. But in both countries it could be no more than a transition stage, preparatory to the assumption by the whole community of the responsibility for its own destinies. While the transition lasted, it seemed, to the middle class itself, that stability and finality had been attained; but all the time the fermentation of the democratic idea was at work below.

The years from 1830 to 1848, which are pre-eminently the period of this underground fermentation, form one of the most fascinating periods of modern history; and it is strange that their essential features have been so little explored or discussed. For during these years, in a degree unknown in any other period, there was going on an all but universal European or cosmopolitan movement, mainly conducted in secret. Its object was the realisation of the twin ideals of Nationalism and Democracy, with which, here and there in the bigger centres of population, the new and half-formulated ideal of Socialism was beginning to be associated. On the Nationalist aspect of this movement we have already said something.[1] On the Socialist dreams which were beginning

[1] *Nationalism and Internationalism*, pp. 80 ff.

to be blent with it we shall presently find it necessary to make some comment. But for our present purpose, and for its immediate effects upon the course of events, its democratic or Liberal aspect is the most important.

Inspired and encouraged by the success of the revolutions of 1830, partial and incomplete as it had been, the apostles of democracy devoted themselves during the following years to an ardent and unceasing propaganda, the main centres of which were to be found among the revolutionary exiles gathered in Paris and London, in Brussels and Bern ; for these were the only important centres where free discussion was possible. This feverish propaganda spread over the whole of Europe, and was conducted by means of secret clubs, and the dissemination of pamphlets and other literature. Everywhere it was eagerly welcomed, especially by students, and by the more educated artisans of the great cities. Governments were only half aware of its magnitude and strength, and for that reason were completely taken by surprise by the sudden unanimous upheaval of 1848 which was its consequence. The elaborate police-systems of Austria and Prussia were quite unable to combat it or even to reveal it. It penetrated even into the vast inchoate mass of the Russian people, and gave rise (in reaction against ferocious repression) to the movement of Nihilism, which took its birth during these years.

There was only one European country in which this democratic agitation was allowed to proceed quite openly. This was Britain, where it took the form of the Chartist movement—an organised demand for manhood suffrage, vote by ballot and annual elections, behind which lay vague and conflicting schemes of social reorganisation. The Chartists had their newspapers, in which even the

most violent among them could formulate their programme without restraint ; they had their public meetings and demonstrations, subject to no restriction except that of not interfering with public order ; and the nation as a whole took part in the canvassing of these proposals, which had to stand such a fire of criticism as the underground propaganda of other countries never met. In the result, though there was some local rioting, there was never any danger of revolution. The extent and character of the movement was perfectly known. It was never a huge, vague mystery, as in other countries. Its culmination took the peaceful form of a monster procession to present a petition to Parliament. Nobody interfered with the procession ; only a large number of private citizens were asked to enrol themselves as special constables to help the police in preventing the outbreak of disorders. The day passed off without disturbance. The petition was presented, and disregarded ; most of its demands were actually granted in course of time, but as the result of deliberation, and not of violence.

But far more valuable and important than the Chartist agitation were various other spontaneous movements which were going on during the period in Britain, among the artisan classes of the towns ; for their success demonstrated that these classes also possessed in a very high degree the power of conducting common affairs by discussion and agreement. Since 1825 workpeople had been allowed freely to organise trade unions, a right which was regarded with the gravest apprehension in other countries. As was to be expected, these organisations made at first many mistakes in their endeavours to wrest from the employing classes better conditions of life and labour for their members. But the good which they

achieved vastly outweighed the evil, and they produced in the best sections of the artisan community a habit of co-operation and of regard for common interests, even though they were primarily the interests of a class, which prepared the way for the coming participation of these classes in the direction of national affairs. Not less valuable were the activities of the co-operative societies and friendly societies, which were establishing themselves during these years. Thus, during the period of middle-class rule, the British people, true to their ancient instincts, were preparing themselves for democracy by a spontaneous increase and development of the arts of self-government; and it was because they were doing this, and were left free to do it, as well as because the public discussion of political questions was unrestrained, that Britain was undisturbed by the great upheaval of 1848, though the forces which produced it were as actively at work within her bounds as in any other country.

For the year 1848 brought the sudden culmination of all this long underground preparation. In February of that year the Orleanist monarchy, and the middle-class system which it represented, suddenly collapsed before the barricades of Paris, and a democratic republic based on universal suffrage was set up in its place. With amazing speed the infection spread from France into the neighbouring countries, whose soil had been so laboriously prepared. It seized possession of all the states of Germany and Italy, and produced a simultaneous upheaval among the discordant nationalities of Austria. Everywhere, in the face of an apparently unanimous public demand, the ruling governments found it impossible to offer any resistance. Everywhere parliamentary institutions, based upon universal suffrage, were

set up. The whole of Metternich's reactionary system tumbled to pieces like a house of cards. In Germany not only were all the states, including Prussia, driven to consent to the establishment of democratic government, but a single parliament, elected by universal suffrage, met at Frankfort to draw up a constitution for a new united German state. Until the autumn of 1848 it appeared as if the democratic revolution was going to be completely triumphant, and as if Britain, hitherto the leader of the movement towards self-government, was going to be left completely in the background. The sweeping French theories of political liberty had got the upper hand, and they had certainly shown a power to arouse the enthusiasm of peoples such as the slow and practical experiments of Britain had never exhibited.

But in the autumn of 1848 the reaction began. By the middle of 1849 the complete democratic triumph which had seemed within sight had everywhere become hopeless. By 1850 the old régime seemed to be, everywhere except in France, fully restored; and in France itself the democratic republic of 1848 had by 1852 passed into the despotic Second Empire, more repressive in its policy than the middle-class monarchy of Louis Philippe, or even the restoration-monarchy of Louis XVIII., had ever been. The Austrian Empire returned to a hidebound system of reaction yet more severe than that which had existed from 1815 to 1848. Italy sank back again into disunion, and in every Italian state save one the old dark tyranny revived. In Germany the deadening forms of the Confederation of 1815, which had been swept aside in 1848, were re-established, and the petty princes were left free to re-establish unqualified personal rule, and in most cases did so. From all these lands, so

recently full of great hopes, a throng of exiles poured forth to take refuge in Britain or in America, and the victory of the system of self-government seemed in 1850 to be more distant than ever.

The disastrous failure of the great upheaval of 1848 seemed to contemporary Liberals to be an irremediable tragedy. And indeed, if it could have achieved even a partial victory, the subsequent history of Europe would have been widely different, and probably much happier. Especially unfortunate was the total failure of the revolution in Germany; for if Germany could have been unified under a democratic form of government, by the spontaneous action of her whole people working in harmony with the peoples of other lands, she would have been saved from the poison which came from the military dominion of Prussia, and which has made her a danger and a terror not merely to her neighbours but to the whole of civilisation. As it was, the failure of 1848 left her ready to be the victim of Bismarck, and of the spirit which he embodied. The nationalist idea was not destroyed or weakened in Germany by the failure of 1848; but having been disappointed of the dream of securing national unity through democratic machinery, it was ready to use the weapons of blood and iron, force and fraud.

Yet the failure of 1848 is highly instructive. It was due to two main causes. The first was that its leaders, and still more the bulk of their followers, were everywhere impracticable theorists, without any real experience in political affairs. The second was that because the democratic movement was cosmopolitan in character, and wholly disregarded distinctions of national tradition and temper, it came inevitably into conflict with the

prickly spirit of national pride, which was a factor in the '48 even more potent than the Liberal movement itself. The Liberal cause was ruined in Austria by the antipathy between Magyars and Slavs. It was ruined in Germany by the difficulty of reconciling the demand for the unity of all the German lands (including German Austria) with the demand for an effective central representative control. It was ruined in Italy partly by provincial particularism, and partly by the failure of the Austrian peoples to recognise that the Italian cause was identical with their own; they combined with their zeal for liberty a resolution not to let their subject peoples escape from their rule, and therefore provided the armies which first crushed the Italian resistance, and could then be turned back upon their own insecurely established liberties. The failure of 1848 was, in short, inevitable, because the attempt was made to establish a democratic system suddenly, without the provision of any preliminary training in self-government for the peoples who were to carry it into effect, and before the victory of the national cause had provided that foundation of unity without which self-government cannot work.

The 1848 revolution was, however, not quite resultless. It produced lasting effects upon the government of five states—Holland, Denmark, Sardinia, France, and Prussia —and the memory of it exercised a very important influence upon the minds of ruling princes, which, after an interval, contributed to bring about the widespread development of parliamentary institutions in the period from 1859 onwards.

Although Holland was not the scene of any revolutionary outbreak in 1848, the king was persuaded by the spectacle of the disturbance in other lands to concede

a revision of the constitution of 1815, under which he had wielded an uncontrolled authority over the executive. The Dutch constitution of 1848 established a genuine parliamentary system, with responsible ministers and a moderate middle-class franchise. Under this system Holland took its place, along with Britain and Belgium, as one of the few states wherein national policy was controlled by the popular will, and, apart from a long agitation for the extension of the suffrage, which ultimately triumphed in 1887, she has been in a remarkable degree free from civil dissensions, and has enjoyed unbroken peace and prosperity. In Denmark the king, hitherto absolute, was persuaded by the revolutionary movement to grant a democratic constitution in 1849; but he soon changed his mind, and in 1854 and 1855 the powers of the representative body were reduced to a mere shadow. Still, Denmark has possessed some sort of parliamentary institutions ever since 1849.

Sardinia was the only one of the Italian States which remained faithful to the promise of self-government which all the States had been forced to give in 1848. Although her king, Victor Emanuel, might have got better terms from victorious Austria if he had been willing to break his word and fall in with the reaction, he held out staunchly. And this good faith brought a rich reward. It made Sardinia appear the only hope of freedom for Italy in the eyes of Italian patriots. And the parliamentary system working in Turin from 1848 onwards gave to the great statesman Cavour, who was to be the real creator of Italian unity, the chance of rising to the leadership of the national cause. It is worth noting that Cavour was an admirer of the British system, and from the first the new Parliament of Turin modelled

its proceedings upon the British exemplar. Though the franchise in Sardinia was wide, it was not so wide as universal suffrage. Perhaps it was this fact alone which enabled it to resist the reactionary influences, which would have been greatly strengthened if the mass of the peasantry, under priestly control, had exercised the controlling power.

In France universal (manhood) suffrage was the only permanent result of 1848; it has remained undisturbed from that day to this. Beyond question it was the institution of universal suffrage which enabled Napoleon III. to sweep aside the republican system, and to establish his despotic empire. Lamartine and the other leaders of the revolution had been dominated not only by the theory of complete democracy, but by the old Montesquieu doctrine of the division of powers, whose consequences we have already analysed in the case of America. Instead of making the executive responsible to the legislature, they had given it an independent position, under the direction of a President who was to be (on the American model) directly elected by popular vote, and whose mandate therefore would appear to be as valid as, and even more immediate than, that of Parliament itself. The magic of Napoleon's name sufficed to secure for him an overwhelming popular vote as President. His position as President gave him control over the army and over the bureaucracy, which was still the most effective force in the government of France. Aiming, from the moment of his election, at the re-establishment of his uncle's practically despotic system, he set himself especially to win the support of the Church, which still wielded a very powerful influence over the mass of the peasantry, and of the prosperous middle class, which was alarmed, and

alienated from the liberal cause, by the undigested Socialist programmes put forward in Paris during the excitement of 1848, and by the bloody and reckless disorders to which they had led. When Parliament, largely influenced by middle-class feeling, showed a desire to restrict universal suffrage, Napoleon posed as the protector of the principle, and used this as a pretext for the monstrous *coup d'état* of 1851, whereby the Parliament was dissolved and most of its leading members thrown into prison. Supported by the army, the bureaucracy, and the Church, he was able to secure from the votes of an uneducated peasantry an overwhelming majority for a plebiscite confirming these lawless acts, and establishing a practical autocracy ; and a year later a second plebiscite authorised the establishment of a hereditary empire. The most rigid control over the Press, the most ruthless persecution of all opposition, did not in the least impair his hold on the mass of the electors, supported as it was by the moral influence of the Church, and by the organised corruption of the bureaucracy. There was not in Europe a more complete autocracy than that which was wielded by Napoleon III. between 1851 and 1867. It rested upon universal suffrage, and could not have existed for a day if the voting power had been limited to those classes which possessed some political knowledge and some freedom of thought. France had taken too sudden a leap into complete democracy ; she paid for it by a ruinous despotism.

But the most interesting of the permanent results of 1848 was the introduction of the semblance of a parliamentary system into the militarist and bureaucratic government of Prussia, and the formal fulfilment, after a delay of nearly half a century, of the promise given in

1813. There was, indeed, no State in Europe for which a system of self-government seemed less appropriate than Prussia, for the greatness of this State had been absolutely the creation of a strong military monarchy. Originally a 'mark' or border province, a sort of permanent armed camp thrown out by the Germans into the realm of the Slavs, Prussia had never owed its growth to any kind of national feeling. Every addition to its territory had been carved out by the sword, or won by fraud; and the landed gentry of the true Prussian territory east of the Elbe, the celebrated 'Junkers,' were traditionally a fighting caste, who owed their lands to the sword, and had never forgotten it, and who still, in the nineteenth century, exercised a quite feudal dominance over their tenantry. They had found in the princes of the Hohenzollern dynasty leaders after their own heart, and had provided for many generations the officer-class of the very efficient Prussian army. Brave, brutal, competent and domineering, materialists and believers that Might is Right, they scorned all the sentimentalism of the Liberals and the Nationalists. They were the ruling class of a State which had won greatness by means of force and fraud, and by these means alone, and these seemed to them the only stable foundations for greatness in States. They believed in discipline, not liberty. Regarding war as the highest of political activities, they saw in the warrior-leaders of the State its natural rulers, and the notion of settling vexed questions by the ballot-papers of the mob filled them with mere contempt.

The 'Junkers' formed the first of the two pillars of the Prussian monarchy. The second was its highly efficient bureaucracy, the best-trained and most competent public serviee in Europe, which had been developed by Frederick

William I. and his successors since the beginning of the eighteenth century. With a fine tradition of industry and method, the Prussian bureaucracy combined a masterful contempt for the intelligence of the populace whom it brigaded and dragooned. No one could be more unsympathetic, or more indifferent to the tastes and preferences of ordinary men, than the Prussian bureaucrats ; but their hard and bullying methods had produced excellent material results. It was their work which had enabled a poor and thinly peopled State to play the part of a great Power. They had done wonders in reorganising the new provinces acquired by Prussia in 1815. They were the organisers of the Prussian Zollverein, the most remarkable political creation of early nineteenth-century Germany. With their tradition of brilliant professional efficiency, and their knowledge of the great successes which it had won, they were naturally slow to believe that the enthronement of the ignorant mass could bring any good results. Thus the two main factors of Prussian greatness were united in their contempt for the democratic theory. They preferred to pin their faith to the divine right of the Hohenzollern monarchy, whose servants they had always been, and which had given them the opportunity of winning their triumphs.

Yet even in Prussia the demand for liberty and self-government had found an echo. Even the Prussian people were attracted by the dream of being able to call their souls their own, and of securing that the objects pursued by the State should be those dictated by the public conscience, by what Rousseau called the General Will, not those entertained by any ambitious dominant caste, however efficient. In 1813 the universality of this demand had led Frederick William III. to promise

a constitution, but the promise had never been fulfilled. In 1848 the demand for political liberty was so overwhelming and so unanimous, even in Berlin, that Frederick William IV. gave way, and in spite of the disgust of his Junker and bureaucrat advisers, permitted the election, by universal suffrage, of a representative body which was to draw up a liberal constitution of the most approved modern type. This assembly actually met, and talked a good deal. As soon as the reaction was well under way, the king dissolved it. But being at the moment anxious to placate the German Liberals (who deeply distrusted Prussia) because he hoped for their support in securing the leadership of the national movement, he thought it wise to issue a constitution of his own devising. This was the constitution of 1850, and as, unlike most of the systems of these years, it was allowed to survive, it is still the ruling constitution of the Prussian State. On the surface it was most liberal in character. It set up a Parliament of two Houses, an Upper House partly hereditary and partly nominated by the Crown, and a Lower House elected by universal suffrage.

But a closer analysis shows that this appearance of liberality was only a mask, and that the scheme had been devised with great skill to take away with one hand what it seemed to give with the other. The Upper House being mainly nominated, and drawn from the landed class who were all by tradition devoted monarchists, was far more completely dependent upon the Crown than the House of Lords ever was in Britain; and as it possessed an equality of power with the Lower House, it could be trusted to ensure that any proposals distasteful to the government should be suppressed. The Lower House, though elected by universal suffrage, was by no means

so democratic as this would suggest; for by a very ingenious device the electors were divided into three classes according to the amount of direct taxation which they paid: the few richest men who between them paid one-third of the taxes formed the first class; the more numerous but still few men next most heavily taxed formed the second class; and the whole mass of poor folk who paid no direct taxes at all were lumped with the very large number of men of small fortune who between them paid the last third of the total. Each of these groups had equal voting powers, so that though every adult male had a vote, the vote of a rich man weighed as heavily as many hundreds or thousands of poor men's votes; and it might be expected that the forces of conservatism could generally be secure of a majority.

Still more significant were the restrictions imposed upon the powers of the new Parliament. As the constitution had been granted by a royal concession, it was held that the king had alienated from the mass of his hitherto unlimited powers only those which he had specifically defined in his instrument of concession. All residual authority must be regarded as remaining with the Crown; and in any case of doubt as to whether the Landtag (parliament) possessed a right which it claimed, the award must be in favour of the Crown. Now the rights definitely conceded were only two. The Landtag's approval was required for new projects of legislation, and for new proposals of taxation or loans. So far as concerns legislation, the whole body of existing law (which assumed the existence of an autocratic authority) retained, of course, its validity, and could not be altered without the consent of the Upper House and the Crown, which was never obtainable when any real restriction upon govern-

mental authority was proposed. New laws initiated in the Lower House had not the faintest chance of passing unless they were approved by the government; and for this reason the Lower House soon gave up the attempt to initiate legislation, and perforce confined itself to debating government proposals, which it had no hope of being able seriously to alter. So far as concerned taxation, the Landtag was precluded from touching any already existing tax; it could only approve or disapprove of new taxes.

Such were the actual powers of the new Parliament. They were modest enough. But far more important were the powers withheld from its purview. In accordance with the mischievous doctrine of 'division of powers,' it was allowed no control over executive government. It could not appoint or dismiss a single minister, and the most overwhelming adverse vote could have no effect upon ministerial action, because, lacking the power of refusing supplies, the representative house had no means of enforcing its opinion. The heads of the great departments were not to be, as in England, politicians sitting in Parliament; they were independent permanent servants of the Crown, and though they might attend either house to make statements or answer questions, they did so *de haut en bas*, from a raised dais, and could not be compelled to say more than they thought fit. In other words, the Crown retained an entirely independent control of the bureaucracy; and as the bureaucracy was much older than Parliament, and as its power was more effectually rooted in every part of the country than that of Parliament could for long hope to be, this meant that the real conduct of government was wholly removed from parliamentary control. Lastly, the army, which

had always been the main source of the power of the Hohenzollerns, was entirely withdrawn from the control or criticism of Parliament. No Hohenzollern would willingly allow, or has ever allowed, any other power to share in the supreme command over the army; and as, by Prussian law, the army included in some sense the whole manhood of the nation under the age of forty, this was a limitation of the most vital import. As fully as the empire of Napoleon, the Hohenzollern throne had always rested, and now rests, ultimately upon military strength; and so long as the royal control over the military forces of the State remains unqualified, Prussia must continue to be essentially a despotism, whatever the constitutional forms by which it is masked.[1]

Thus the constitution of 1850, liberal as it appeared on the surface, did not give to the people of Prussia the power of controlling the character and aims of their own government. It left the old bureaucratic and militarist system as powerful as ever, only strengthened by being made aware of the trend of public opinion. In some respects the system of government thus set up resembled that of the Tudors in England; in the one case as in the other, Parliament was permitted to approve of legislation and taxation, but not to meddle in the conduct of government. But the differences are vital. The Tudors had no army; and, lacking military force, could not have maintained their authority for a month if they had violated public sentiment. Within twelve years of 1850, Bismarck was to show that there was no such restriction upon the Hohenzollern monarchy. The Tudors had no

[1] It is worth while to quote once more the Prussian historian and publicist Delbrück: 'Wherein lies the real power? It lies in arms. The question, therefore, by which to determine the essential character of a State is always the question, "Whom does the Army obey?"'—*Regierung und Volkswille*, p. 133.

highly organised and efficient bureaucracy, spreading its net over the whole country; they were dependent for the exercise of their will upon the self-governing local organisations. In all essentials, England under the Tudors was a much more genuinely self-governing land than Prussia after 1850.

By 1855 the results of the period of liberal revolutions had been fully revealed. They were greater than could have been anticipated by any but the most sanguine prophets in 1815. The forms, at least, of representative government had been instituted in most of the European states. But there were only four states—Britain, Belgium, Holland, and Sardinia—in which the main lines of national policy were effectively determined by the representatives of the nation. In France universal suffrage, prematurely established, had led to the military autocracy of Napoleon III. In Prussia the old ruling factors retained their supremacy, unaffected by the forms of Parliament. Denmark had followed the Prussian example, and neither the old-fashioned estates of Sweden, nor the democratic assembly of Norway, had any control over the executive government. Spain had been nominally a constitutional state since 1834, but she was ruled in fact by a succession of cliques and military dictators. Portugal, nominally constitutional since 1826, was in much the same condition. Neither of these countries can in any real sense be described as self-governing, because in neither was the people sufficiently educated to be able to use the machinery that had been set up. Greece had obtained a parliamentary system in 1843, but it had been made futile by the policy of the German prince, Otho of Bavaria, who occupied the Greek throne; and he was able thus to use the representative machinery, in the Prussian manner, as a sort of veil for

absolutism, mainly because the people were not yet educated into the capacity for self-government. In the Austrian Empire, and in all the Italian states save Sardinia, a brutal and blind reaction was triumphant. In Russia and the Turkish Empire the supremacy of despotism had not yet been even shaken. Yet it was a real success which these forty years had achieved. In all the most progressive states the principle of popular participation in government had been, however grudgingly, accepted.

These successes were, for the most part, due to the leadership of the middle classes, and they represented, on the whole, a victory for middle-class ideas, and especially for the ideas of the energetic classes of capitalist *entrepreneurs* who were everywhere guiding the fortunes of the new industries. They desired a share in government partly, of course, because the spirit of liberty was working in them. But they desired it also as a means of securing the removal of vexatious restrictions upon the operation of the potent new forces which they controlled. Freedom for them meant, in a pre-eminent degree, economic freedom, the withdrawal of restraints upon industry. They did not wish for political power in order that they might use it for the construction of a new social order, because they did not believe in the deliberate design or regulation of social activities by the state ; in their view the new order would grow most healthily if it was left to itself. This view was most strongly held in Britain, where the influence of the industrial-capitalist class was more powerful than anywhere else ; and in Britain this was pre-eminently the age of ' Manchesterism ' and of *laisser-faire*. But the same attitude was perceptible in all the other lands where the industrial change was at work, though in other countries it was

qualified and restrained by the surviving power of the old ruling elements, and by the tradition of strong government.

Essentially this attitude implied a new definition of political liberty, according to which that community is most free where the government has least power to interfere with or control the action of individuals. The free State, on this definition, ought not to be regarded as a self-governing organic society responsible for the well-being of all its parts ; on the contrary, its members, as free individuals, should be held wholly responsible for their own well-being, and the State ought to be no more than an ' association ' of individuals for the purpose of meeting a minimum of common needs, the maintenance of order, the protection of life and property, the defence of the whole body against foreign attack. Its business ought to be, mainly, to ' hold the ring,' and let the natural forces, interests, and ideas which are at work in the community work themselves out in free competition : ' a free field, and no favour, and the devil take the hindmost.' Such an attitude was natural to those who drew the greatest profit from the new industrial movements. But it minimised the value and functions of organised society to an extent never known before.

It is neither just nor true to say, what is often said, that the exponents of these ' individualist ' and essentially anti-social ideas were governed exclusively by considerations of their own material interests. Such a judgment, like any judgment which fixes its attention solely upon the materialist aspects of human life, is profoundly false and misleading. The individualist creed of the mid-nineteenth century was inspired, among its best advocates (and it is only by its best advocates that any doctrine can fairly be judged) by a genuine belief in liberty, and

in the value of human personality, a genuine fear lest the vigour and initiative of the individual, which is the source of all progress, should be diminished or hampered by excessive regulation or cosseting. Its best advocates were confident that, left to themselves in freedom, rational men were far more likely to work out for themselves in the long run conditions favourable to general well-being than if fallible politicians of limited outlook were to attempt to determine beforehand the unpredictable development of human society. And the individualist period achieved certain results which could scarcely have been attained by men who had a less robust faith in individuality, a less whole-hearted distrust of centralised control. They established freedom of the Press, the utmost freedom of discussion, freedom of association among individuals for all legitimate common purposes, whether these were in accord with the dominant ideas of ruling politicians or not, freedom of religious belief and religious practice, freedom of access to knowledge for all who aspired after it, or could by their own efforts devise the means to attain it. These were great things, and the individualist theorists who laboured to secure them made real contributions to the rise of a richer conception of liberty which was to follow them. And if it be true that the régime of almost unrestricted competition was extraordinarily unfair to the weak, and gave every advantage to the strong, at least it is fair to remember that this was in some degree recognised. One of the first enactments of the middle-class Parliament of Britain in 1833 was a Factory Act ; and although the development of the code of regulations for industry was timid and slow, yet there *was* development, and its slowness was not due wholly, or even mainly, to the self-interest of the ' exploiting '

classes, but largely to an honest distrust of interference with individual liberty.

It was inevitable that there should be reaction against this individualist doctrine, this extraordinarily narrow conception of the duties of society to its members; inevitable that the 'hindmost,' whom the prevalent creed so lightly consigned to the care of 'the devil,' should resent this fate, and demand that society should take a less ruthless view of its responsibilities to its own members —especially as, in every community, the 'hindmost' proved to be a great majority of the whole citizen body. And there was a strong under-current of reaction throughout all this period. It found expression in many quarters. In Britain, where the new industrial development was furthest advanced, it inspired much of the writing of Carlyle, of Ruskin, and of Maurice, Kingsley and the other Christian Socialists. But there was little that was positive and constructive about this thinking. For the most part, it went no further than a general denunciation of *laisser-faire*, and an active sympathy with schemes for social betterment. It did not imply any clearly wrought-out theory of the functions of the State. In some cases, as with Carlyle, it was actually hostile to the idea of self-government, and demanded rather 'kingship,' after the Prussian model, imposing 'discipline' from above.

More fruitful, because more in contact with the facts, were the working-class movements of the time; for they were gradually working their way towards a new doctrine. They were deeply influenced by the crude beginnings of the Socialist theory—the theory that it is the duty of the State to undertake the organisation of the material basis of its citizens' lives and not merely to leave it to chance, as the individualist doctrine required. Although

the actual demands of the Chartists were purely political in character, many of them demanded political power for the working class in order that they might have the means of putting this conception into practice. The British working classes of the 'thirties were profoundly influenced by the teachings of the father of modern Socialism, Robert Owen. Owen was a very successful cotton manufacturer, who, impressed by the evil results of an unmitigated system of capitalist control, had carried out, among the workpeople of his own factory at New Lanark, a series of social reforms which were extremely successful, and attracted the admiration of all who saw them. On the basis of this experience he constructed a scheme for the reorganisation of society, whereunder the State was to divide its citizens into co-operative groups of from five hundred to two thousand, each group owning its own means of production. It was a fantastic and unworkable scheme, based upon quite unsound philosophical ideas. But it was the first serious attempt to work out a method for bringing the organised strength of society to bear in order to secure healthy conditions of life and labour for its members. It proclaimed the ideal of the State as a power that should not merely 'hold the ring' while evil and good forces struggled for supremacy, but should deliberately labour to secure the well-being of all its citizens. And this conception of the State as a great partnership for the organisation of good living was in effect a new conception in the modern world, and therefore very valuable in spite of the fantastic forms which it assumed. It might have been, and indeed was, the beginning of a national discussion of the ultimate aims of a free, self-governing society.

Almost contemporary with Owen, a number of French

writers—St. Simon, Fourier, Proudhon, Cabet—were working out similar Utopias, or schemes of social reconstruction, which were, for the most part, even more crude than those of Owen, and which, like his, generally aimed at the organisation of little self-sufficient communities within the State. They even made experiments in the foundation of such communities, especially in America; but all the experiments promptly broke down, mainly because their authors had disregarded the unity and interrelations of the whole complex fabric of modern society. It was with the Frenchman, Louis Blanc, whose *Organisation de Travail* was published in 1839, that the new doctrine first embodied the assertion of the necessity of wholesale and drastic State action in the reorganisation of large-scale industrial methods. Blanc's theories had great influence during the next ten years. They contributed largely to the ferment which produced the revolution of 1848. An attempt was made to put them into operation during the confusion of 1848 in Paris. It was ill-managed, and failed disastrously, partly because the conditions were extremely unfavourable, partly because the new doctrines had received no adequate discussion such as would have demonstrated their defects, while the men who tried to apply them had no training in co-operation. Significantly enough, the chief result of this premature experiment was to make men welcome the despotism of Napoleon III. as a safeguard against disorder.

But towards the close of our period, on the very eve of the revolution of 1848, the Socialist doctrine began to take on an altogether new colour from the teachings of Karl Marx, which were henceforth to affect very deeply the character and aims of the democratic

movement in most European countries; they affect it still to-day. Marx was a middle-class German-Jew, a philosopher trained in the German universities, who had no experience of industrial life, whether on the side of labour or of management; a pure theorist, with a German love of cut-and-dried formulæ. He spent the best part of his life in England, a refugee from the tyranny of his native Prussia, but he was never able to understand the spirit and working of British institutions. His greatest book, *Das Kapital*, was not published until long after this date, and was indeed not completed at the time of his death in 1883. But already before the Revolution of 1848 he had worked out his main ideas. They were embodied in the 'Communist Manifesto,' which he wrote in 1847 for the Communist Union, reorganised in that year.

The motto of the 'Communist Manifesto' was 'Proletarians of all lands, unite'; and in this motto was already proclaimed the essence of the Marxian creed, in so far as it was a programme of action.

Manifestly, this motto repudiated the national idea: the idea of a sentiment of unity overriding the divergencies of class and interest which divide a community, and holding before them all the aim of the common good. The existence of such a sentiment, as we have seen, forms the only practicable basis for self-government on the national scale. But the national idea naturally had little appeal for Marx. Not only was he a Jew, sharing that aloofness from national feelings and traditions which marks many Jews; but he was permanently exiled from the land of his birth, and permanently out of sympathy with the ideas of the land which had given him protection. Instead of desiring to strengthen this sentiment of unity which we call nationality, he desired

rather to destroy it, by stimulating in all lands an intense hostility, an unending and relentless 'Class War' between the *bourgeoisie* or middle class, whom he rather arbitrarily defined as the capitalist class, and the wage-earning operatives whom he described as Proletarians. From his time onwards, the Socialist doctrine has been, among many of its adherents in all countries, no longer what it had been with earlier Socialists, a progressive body of theory as to the way in which nations might healthily order their affairs ; it has been too often simply a proclamation of unceasing and relentless warfare, aiming at no clearly defined end save the defeat and dethronement of the existing dominant classes by the 'Proletarians,' and the establishment of a 'Proletarian Dictatorship.' This sterile and unattractive aim was not, indeed, the essential element in Marx's teaching, properly regarded. But it was the part of it which was most easily grasped, and most readily put into action. It was, in the nature of things, inconsistent with the ideal of growing unity and growing equality which is of the essence of the democratic idea. And the end which it seemed to propose, that of the mere replacement of the rule of one class by that of another, instead of the co-operation of all (despite their differences) for the common advantage, was a fundamentally undemocratic end.

The greatness of Marx (for in some ways he was a great man and a great thinker) was that he insisted upon regarding the whole social movement as a historical development, conditioned by the facts of history. But his view of human history was the most purely materialistic that any reputable thinker has ever propounded. It was what is called a 'realist' view, like the equally ugly *Realpolitik* of the ruling classes of Prussia which had

driven him into exile. For him the material factor, the struggle for wealth, had always been and must always be the sole ruling factor in human life. This was a view strangely contradicted by his own long life of ill-rewarded study and devotion to an unpopular cause. Putting aside, as of no account among human motives, the love of God and the love of man, the zeal of martyrs and the sacrifices of patriots, the desire for justice, the passion of freedom, and the zest of adventure, he saw in human history nothing but an unending struggle between classes for the control of the sources of wealth. First the Feudal class had dominated; now the Capitalist class held the upper hand; against them the extruded Proletarian class, in all lands, must declare an undying and pitiless war. Superficially, of course, Marx's view is supported by the facts: it is a part of the truth, misleading unless regarded alongside of other parts of the truth. There have always been, and there perhaps always will be, conflicts in human society between rival classes and rival interests, and out of these conflicts progress has come. But cutting across these, there have been other conflicts, greater because less materialist, the conflict between the claims of individual liberty and the claims of that authority which seems necessary for the common weal, the conflict between rival religious ideas, between various political conceptions, between ideals and material interests. And in all these conflicts, the conflict of classes equally with the rest, right has never lain wholly on one side, nor have the lines of division between rival parties or interests ever been sharp and clear-cut. There is a sense in which class-war (or, to use a less question-begging term, class-conflict) is not only an inevitable but a healthy feature of the life of every living society: it is the natural

and proper tendency of every class to strive for improved status, for the recognition of its value to the common weal, and for the opportunities of fuller life for its members. The aim of such conflict, rightly conceived, should be to reduce so far as possible the division between classes, and to create a greater equality of treatment; and it will naturally draw reinforcement from many other struggling causes which have in themselves no direct relation to the economic war. This is a very different aim from the aim of rigidifying and emphasising class distinctions, with a view to the ultimate substitution of the ascendancy of one embittered class for that of another, which seemed to many of its upholders to be the essence of Marx's doctrine. Hence the Marxian view, which paid no regard to any conflict save the materialist conflict of economic classes, and which assumed that in this conflict, so far as right and wrong were involved at all, the right was all on one side, was an essentially false view, fundamentally reactionary and undemocratic.

Materialism is nearly always closely allied with fatalism, and Marx combined with his materialist view of history a curiously fatalistic view of the future course of economic development. He held that capitalism must lead to an increasing unification of industries, and in this idea (which he borrowed from Louis Blanc), events have in some degree justified him. He held that wealth must gradually be concentrated in a smaller and smaller number of hands; here the facts have been dead against him, for one of the features of the last two generations has been a rapid increase in the number not only of large but of moderate fortunes. He held that the condition of the working classes must become steadily more miserable, and this anticipation also has been utterly

falsified by the facts, in all countries. His conclusion was that capitalism contained the seeds of its own ruin ; that the moment must come when it would be easily overthrown ; and that the Proletarian class must organise itself, and train itself by unresting war, so as to be able to seize this moment when it came, by taking command of the State and assuming the control of all capital. He did not, apparently, see that even State-owned capital must be managed by somebody ; and that a new class-war must promptly begin, on his own principles, between the bureaucrats who would manage, and the still 'Proletarian' class who must work under their direction for a wage. He did not in the least degree foresee what has actually come about—the increasing diffusion of ownership of capital, so that a large proportion even of his Proletarian class have themselves become in a modest way capitalists. He did not foresee the immense funds of capital that would be wielded by co-operative groups of workpeople. He did not foresee the process whereby most holders of capital are in an increasing degree becoming also wage-earners, and many wage-earners holders of capital, so that his arbitrarily differentiated classes are increasingly melting into one another. The time is coming, it would seem, when we shall all be wage-earners, and all owners of capital, as well as all citizens of the State.

But, in truth, Marx gave no clear idea of how the future State was to be arranged, except that it was to own all capital and to be controlled by the Proletarian class. It was no part of his aim to set an ideal before his followers. To do that would be only to construct another Utopia, and he was the sworn enemy of Utopias, that is, of clearly grasped ideals for the future. When the English Radical, Professor Beesley, wrote an article on 'The Future of the Working Classes,' Marx wrote to him that

he must henceforth be regarded as a reactionary, since only reactionaries laid plans for a better state of things in the future! There was no place in his philosophy for human design springing from good-will. Class-war for its own sake, and the rejection of all illusions about patriotism, national unity, or the co-operation of different types and different schools of thought to produce an increasing well-being: class-war between artificially defined classes, whose differences must be intensified and emphasised in order that their warfare might be intensified—that was the most effective part of his message to his age.

The doctrines of Marx have been riddled by the criticism not only of his opponents but of his followers; the economic movement of the age has falsified most of his predictions; the national spirit has proved enormously more potent than he supposed. But still the doctrine of class-war as he preached it exercises its malignant influence: the doctrine of class-war, not as a necessary evil, but as a thing to be desired and fomented, as something that must go on aimlessly until, suddenly, and in some unrealised way, it shall bring about an unforeseen and unprepared millennium. That is not anywhere to-day the doctrine of enlightened Socialists, but it everywhere gets a ready hearing, and it has left its trail even over the thinking of the most intelligent.

Thus over against the narrow and limited doctrine of Individualism, which nevertheless was not a rigidly defined creed, but was capable of expansion, and which in any case did aim, however mistakenly, at the supposed welfare of the whole, Marx substituted a still more narrow and more limited creed: a creed which, while it vaguely promised an ultimate undefined millennium, seemed to forbid its followers to think of the common weal, or to make plans for the future, and preached the value of

economic war for its own sake, just as the supporters of Prussian government preached the value of national war for its own sake. Was this to be the new form of the movement towards self-government—this ideal of Class-War leading to Class-Ascendancy? If so, the end of it must be a tyranny more unhappy than any of the older class-ascendancies, since these at least had been, what this could never be, the willingly accepted rule of a class which formed the natural leaders in a unified society. Thus it was not only against despotism, and the entrenched dominion of dominant classes, that the cause of national self-government must henceforth fight; it must fight also against the distortion of its own aims into something as ugly as that against which it was already fighting. That issue was already emerging before the close of the period of Liberal Revolutions.

It is interesting to note the answer almost immediately given to it in Britain. In 1851 was founded the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the first trade union of a new type, which incorporated a number of local and conflicting bodies, and undertook the direction of the interests of the operatives in a whole great industry throughout the country. It was soon followed by other similar bodies, which were now so powerful that all employers must take account of them, and which were, therefore, able almost to take a share in the management of their respective industries, so far as concerned rates of wages and the hours and conditions of labour. Here was, in a sense, 'class-war.' But it was class-war of the most legitimate type; it aimed at obtaining recognition, status and decent conditions for the operative class by a reasonable process of discussion and bargaining with their employers. The leaders of these great trade unions achieved very striking success. But they did it by

definitely limiting their activity to the sphere with which they were immediately concerned, and which they fully understood. They did not declare war *à outrance*, war for its own sake, against the whole existing order of society, for the attainment of a remote and unanalysed end. They faced the facts as they were, and made the best of them. And they won for their own organisations a sort of partnership in the management of industry, not by any means complete, capable of great expansion, but promising very fruitful future developments. They took no direct part in public affairs ; these, as yet, seemed to be the field of other conflicts, distinct from the economic conflicts of the workshop, and on these their members were free to take what side they liked. But their work afforded both to leaders and to rank and file a training in the practice of self-government, in give-and-take, in the subordination of self to common interests, in the habit of recognising the element of right that is always to be found on the other side ; a training quite invaluable for the time, now close at hand, when their members should play their part as fully enfranchised citizens in the self-governing nation. When they did so, it was to take part not in a single all-embracing conflict of classes in the economic field, such as Marx envisaged, but in the multiform and complex conflicts of ideas, interests and aims which form the life of any living society, and in which no free man ought to feel that his attitude is irrevocably dictated to him beforehand by the accident of his birth or occupation.

It long remained a complaint among the Marxians that Britain, in which Marx spent most of his life, was less influenced by his ideas than any o her European country. Had not the traditions of British self-government something to do with this ?

VII

THE ERA OF NATIONAL UNIFICATION 1850-1878

THERE are several very marked contrasts between the period of Liberal Revolutions with which we have just dealt, and the period of National Unification which immediately followed it. During the first period, as we have seen, there was an incessant internal ferment in nearly all the European countries, and especially in the more developed countries of Western and Central Europe; and this ferment found vent in an extraordinary series of revolutionary upheavals. During the second period there were indeed revolutions in Poland and Greece in 1863; but apart from the bloody and futile frenzy of the Paris Commune in 1871, the more advanced states of the West, great and small, were extraordinarily free from internal upheavals. Spontaneous revolution from below seemed to have become *vieux jeu*, and reformers appeared to have learned to look to other means of remedying the evils from which they suffered. This quiescence became still more marked during the next era, 1878-1900.

But, on the other hand, while there had been no formal wars of any magnitude between civilised states in the period 1815-50, the following generation was filled with great wars. There were the Crimean War of 1853-56, the Italian campaigns of 1859-60, the war of Prussia and

Austria against Denmark in 1864, the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, the Franco-German War of 1870-71, and the Russo-Turkish War of 1878. All these wars arose, directly or indirectly, out of the movement for national unity and freedom, and the Polish revolt of 1863 was due to the same cause. Nationalism, rather than Liberalism, was thus the dominant factor in this era. Yet one of the chief results of this period of warfare between organised states was an expansion of the institutions of self-government far more remarkable than had come about during the period of Liberal Revolutions; and in the event most of the European states found themselves by 1878 equipped with systems of government which were to prove lasting and stable. In the main European states, putting aside the vexed and backward areas of the East and South-east, there have been comparatively few political changes of importance since that year. And we may thus fairly say that the era of National Unification was also the era of constitutional scttlement, so far as the principal states were concerned. It is important that we should realise the close connection which exists between these things—between the triumph of nationalism on the one hand, and on the other the decay of revolutionism and the stable settlement of constitutional problems.

To begin with, the triumph of the nationalist movement in such divided states as Germany and Italy got rid of one of the weaknesses which had affected the reform movements in the previous age, by putting an cnd to the conflict between the national and the liberal ideas which, as we have seen, had often been thc undoing of both. This weakness still survived in such a state as Austria-Hungary, where the nationalist movement

achieved no clear success ; but it disappeared elsewhere. At the same time, national unity provided one of the essential foundations of self-government—unity of sentiment among those who took part in it, and this unity of sentiment was especially strong where men had been combined by the trials of a common struggle, and the exaltation of a common victory. This is perhaps the main reason for the successful working of the institutions set up in the new nation-states.

In the second place, the leadership in the successful national movements of this period was assumed in each case by established governments, commanding the organised force of their states. It was the military strength of the kingdom of Sardinia, backed by the armies of France, which freed Italy from the yoke of Austria, though this result could not have been fully attained if the national spirit had not been at work already throughout Italy. It was the military strength of Prussia which enabled Bismarck to unify first the North German Confederation, and then the whole German Empire, under Prussian leadership, though even Bismarck's victories would not have been so easily won, and certainly their results would not have been so enthusiastically accepted, if the national spirit had not already been stimulated throughout all Germany. And this activity of governments in the popular cause affected the liberal movement in two ways. On the one hand, it undermined or destroyed the hostility which had been felt towards existing governments by the leaders of the reforming parties, while at the same time it brought home to them the strength of organised military power, the futility of fighting against it, and the importance of making terms with it ; so that those who had been in the earlier period

the sworn foes of kings and their ministers, were ready for an alliance with them, now that they had assumed national leadership. On the other hand, governments themselves were taught by the experience of the national wars to realise the strength they could derive from popular support, and were therefore ready to make terms with their former foes, and to buy their support by the concession of self-governing institutions, either frankly and fully, as in Italy, or with reserves and exceptions which would nullify the concessions, as in Germany. For these reasons the period of nationalist wars brought about an alliance in the newly united nations between their governments and the old reforming parties, which were mainly of middle-class origin.

A further cause strengthened this tendency. By the middle of the nineteenth century the industrial movement which had started in Britain had taken hold of the more advanced continental countries. The classes mainly responsible for the direction of the new industries, therefore, became distrustful of revolutionary disturbances, because they needed internal order. On the other hand, governments could no longer disregard the makers of new national wealth, or any longer exclude them from a voice in the direction of national affairs. Hence the economic factor formed another force contributing to bring about an alliance between governments and the middle class; and the form which this alliance took was everywhere the establishment of a parliamentary system on the British model. Even where these parliamentary systems were based upon universal suffrage, they were controlled, during this period and for a long time afterwards, by the men of the middle class, because they were better educated, had more leisure for politics, and possessed larger

resources for political warfare. Hence those among the leaders of working-class revolt who were disciples of Marx were for a time tempted to regard parliamentary institutions as a peculiarly middle-class and 'capitalistic' device, though they had no very clear ideas what they would substitute for them.

But the working-class or proletarian agitations were not as yet very formidable, or likely to disturb the stability of the new order. It is true that it was during this period that the Marxian creed began to exercise a wide influence throughout Europe, and that Social Democratic parties, devoted to the 'Class-War' began to be formed. In 1864 the International Workmen's Association was founded in London, with an inaugural address from Karl Marx, and a constitution drawn up by him. Its object was to be the carrying out of Marx's doctrines, and it was to have frequent international congresses, and branches in all countries. But its members and its branches were always few; and it had to be wound up in 1876. In 1868 the Anarchist Bakunin founded a rival International Association to forward the class-war by the more direct means of violence, and the quarrels of these two bodies helped to weaken both. There were other movements, also, of the same kind, notably in Germany: in 1863 the brilliant German-Jewish philosopher and epicure, Ferdinand Lassalle, floated a General German Workers' Union, of which something might have come if its able founder had not got himself shot in a duel about his love-affairs with a Countess; in 1868 the German Social Democratic Labour Party was established under the leadership of Bebel, to carry into effect the programme of Marx; and there were similar movements in other countries, mostly ineffective. The Marxian class-war which, if conducted

in accordance with its founder's ideas, would have destroyed national unity everywhere, was thus inaugurated during the period of National Unification. But one of the main reasons for its very modest success was just the fact that, to workmen equally with others, the national idea made an immensely powerful appeal; and governments found they could safely proscribe the movement, and did so, almost everywhere save in Britain, where the tradition of free discussion was too deeply rooted to be disregarded. So the triumph of the parliamentary system was in no way modified by the progress of the Marxian movement, whose advocates soon realised that their best chance of success was in working through Parliament.

It was not only in the countries where the national cause had triumphed that these forces were at work. In those countries also which had to suffer defeat in the wars of nationality, the result was everywhere an expansion of parliamentary institutions; because the existing governments, discredited by defeat, were no longer able to offer effective resistance to the demand for self-government. In Denmark, for example, the disasters of 1864 forced the Crown to accept a real parliamentary system. In Austria the discredit arising from the Italian campaign of 1859 led to lively political agitation from 1860 onwards, and the crushing defeat which Austria had to accept from Prussia in 1866 was quickly followed by a great constitutional change in 1867. In France the humiliations of the Franco-Prussian War led to the downfall of the Napoleonic Empire in 1870, and to the establishment of the democratic Third Republic. Finally, partly under the influence of the prevailing fashion, partly as a natural development of what had been already achieved,

States not directly affected by the wars of nationality introduced changes in their political systems. Britain took a long step towards complete democracy in 1867. Even Russia began the process of reform, though she did not go very far.

It is impossible to analyse all the political changes of these years; and, indeed, such an analysis would be merely wearisome, and would contribute little to our comprehension of the problems of self-government, unless it was carried out in very great detail. We shall therefore content ourselves, in the first place, with a bald catalogue-summary of the political changes of the period, which will serve to show the universality of the movement; and, in the second place, with an analysis of the differences of form assumed by the parliamentary system in a few of the leading states.

In 1859-61, in 1866, and in 1871 the various separately governed provinces of Italy were successively united to the kingdom of Sardinia. To each group of new provinces the privileges of the Sardinian representative system were extended, so that in 1871 Italy as a whole emerged as a single nation-state governed by a limited monarchy whose ministers were responsible to Parliament, as in Britain.

In the years between 1858 and 1863, Russia, hitherto practically untouched by the liberal movement, took the first steps towards a system of self-government by freeing the serfs, by making the law courts independent of the administration, and, above all, by setting up a series of *zemstva*, or county councils, for the management of local affairs. It was the hope of Liberals that these reforms would be followed by the establishment of a representative parliament. This hope, however, was disappointed;

an unhappy reaction undid much of the work already done, and Russia had to wait until the twentieth century for the beginnings of national self-government. But it is significant that even Russia was during this period of organisation affected in some degree by the universal movement.

In 1866 Sweden substituted for her old-fashioned mediæval estates a modern parliament of two Houses, one elected on a narrow, the other on a wide suffrage. In the same year, the King of Denmark, having endured defeat at the hands of Prussia, had to submit to the establishment of a real parliamentary system, closely resembling that of Sweden. In both of these Scandinavian countries the two Houses were given a legal equality ; and under cover of this fact the Crown in both countries, supported by the less popular chamber, was able to retain personal control over the appointment and dismissal of ministers. But this led to unceasing constitutional strife. It took an especially acute form in Norway, where a very democratic parliament resented the independent control over the appointment of ministers claimed by the Swedish king. Throughout the period under review, however, the Crown was able in all three countries to make good its claims, and even to levy taxes in defiance of the hostility of the Lower Houses. The Scandinavian systems, therefore, down to 1878 and later, resembled the Prussian rather than the British model.

From 1862 to 1866 the Prussian monarchy was engaged in a fierce struggle with its Parliament, which ended in a complete victory for the Crown. This struggle forms so important a landmark in the history of European self-government that we shall have to consider it more closely later. In 1866, after the defeat of Austria by Prussia, the

North German Confederation was organised as a consolidated federal State, with a Parliament of two Houses; and in 1871 this Confederation, with the addition of the South German states, became the German Empire. In the Confederation and in the Empire, as in the Prussian kingdom, the control over national policy was retained by the Crown, and was not allowed to pass under the influence of Parliament. This decision was of vital moment for the future history of Europe.

Between 1861 and 1867 the Austrian Empire, hitherto the most obstinate foe of liberalism, also succumbed, at any rate in form, to the liberal movement. After several experiments between 1861 and 1865, its system of government was finally determined by the *Ausgleich* or Compromise of 1867, whereby full parliamentary systems were established in the two parts of the Dual Monarchy. But, as we shall see, parliamentary institutions did not bring to the majority of the population an increase of liberty; they were rather turned into a mechanism for securing the tyrannical supremacy of two minorities—the Magyars in Hungary, the Germans in the Austrian lands. And the main cause of this was the absence of national unity.

Britain, the oldest of the self-governing nations, and the model for all the rest, took during these years what some of her statesmen thought 'a leap in the dark' when by the Reform Act of 1867 she placed her destinies in the hands of the democracy by enfranchising the artisans of the towns. She did not, indeed, go so far as France had gone in 1848 and Prussia in 1850, and institute universal suffrage. Following her traditions, she admitted to a partnership in government only those classes which had already shown in their trade unions, their

friendly societies, and their co-operative societies, that they shared the capacity for managing common affairs by discussion and agreement. But to these classes she made no grudging concession. They obtained the power, if they chose to use it, of controlling through their representatives the whole conduct and spirit of national policy ; whereas the wielders of universal suffrage in Prussia and in Napoleonic France were allowed no more than a shadow of power.

But France, also, the supreme apostle of the gospel of political liberty, was now at last, after so many endeavours and so many disappointments, to be added to the list of fully self-governing countries. Before the onslaught of the Prussian in 1870-71 the imperial system crumbled into ruins. But out of her disasters France arose, sobered and sorrowful, stripped of all illusions ; and without any sweeping assertions of principle, organised in the Third Republic a system wherein, for the first time in all her history, the people were enabled really to control the direction of national policy.

The infection of parliamentarism also captured during these years the infant states of the Balkan peninsula. Greece had possessed a Parliament since 1843, but in 1863, in the course of the revolution by which she got rid of the Bavarian dynasty, she revised her constitution and gave greater powers to her Parliament. Nominally it has had full control of the national government since that date. The two Rumanian provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia had been equipped with representative councils by the Congress of Paris in 1856 ; these councils were combined in 1862, and in 1866, under a new constitution, they were replaced by a two-chamber legislature of the Western pattern, with a nominal control over the

ministry. In 1869, Serbia instituted a single chamber assembly, known as the Skuptshina and elected by practically universal suffrage. In 1878, when Bulgaria had obtained by the gift of Russia her freedom from the Turkish yoke, she also set up a supreme single-chamber legislature, the Sobranje. Nominally all these Balkan Parliaments exercised full control over the executive, but, in fact, the backwardness and the illiteracy of the majority of the electorate left them a prey to many corrupt influences ; the government in power continued to be generally secure of a majority ; and the ruling prince could usually wield a degree of independent authority far more extensive than is suggested by the formal provisions of the constitution. These dangers were, however, scarcely perceived during our period, when men were easily satisfied with the mere forms of self-government.

Lastly, Spain completed the long, confused tale of her constitutional experiments by establishing the constitution of 1869, whereby she set up a two-chamber legislature, the Lower House elected by universal suffrage. This machinery has been applied first to a limited monarchy, then for a brief interval (1873-74) to a republic, and finally to a restored monarchy, which has now existed for forty years, a longer spell than any system has enjoyed in Spain since the close of the Bourbon despotism in 1834. It cannot, however, be said that Spain has ever become in a real sense a self-governing country. Universal suffrage among an ignorant and backward populace has meant that the influences which can be exercised by the government in power will always ensure a majority ; and by giving supremacy to an electorate which is incapable of realising the nature of its responsibilities Spain has,

in fact, like France in the years following 1848, and most of the Balkan states to-day, made herself the prey of corrupting influences of many types.

This is a very impressive catalogue of political changes brought about in nearly all the states of Europe within a single generation; and in summary it amounted to this, that in every country which had not already acquired them, save only Russia and Turkey, parliamentary institutions were established during this generation. And with parliamentary institutions came, as their invariable accompaniment, a very large degree of freedom of speech and of freedom of the Press, together with the universal establishment, wherever it did not already exist, of religious toleration.

The institutions thus rapidly set up, which had become the marks of a civilised government, were everywhere superficially of the same pattern, because they were everywhere modelled on those of Britain, the inventor of parliamentary government. Almost everywhere there were two chambers, the sole exceptions being Serbia and Bulgaria; but the constitution of the Upper Chambers varied widely, and no country in this respect reproduced the British model. Everywhere the Lower Chamber was elected on a democratic basis—usually by universal (manhood) suffrage; and everywhere the assent of both Houses was required for new legislation, while the Lower Chamber (as in Britain) was given a special authority in regard to taxation. But there was one important, and quite inevitable, departure from the British model. Since in every case, save in Britain, the new Parliaments were deliberately created with clearly defined powers, they all had their constitutions and powers laid down in written documents. In no case was the constitution made so

difficult to alter as the American, the first modern example of a deliberately created system ; but there was always some distinction drawn between the process by which ordinary laws were passed and the process by which changes in the fundamental constitution could be made. Hence none of the new systems had the rather bewildering elasticity and adaptability of the British system. In some of the new systems an attempt was made, following the American model, to define a ' division of powers ' between the executive and the legislature. France, indeed, warned by her experience of 1848, did not repeat this blunder, but, by making the executive fully dependent upon the representative body, followed as closely as possible the British model. But in Germany the executive was kept definitely independent of the legislature ; and as the head of the executive was a hereditary monarch, not, as in America, a popularly elected President, this meant that the public control over government was very materially restricted. Even Germany did not make the mistake of severing its executive chiefs from direct contact with the legislature ; though not drawn from among its ordinary members, nor holding their places by its favour, they were empowered to be present at its sessions, and to speak in explanation of the policy they were pursuing.

It would be easy to extend the analysis of the differences in detail which distinguished the new systems one from another : each of them was marked by some special features, arising from the conditions of the nation's life. But these minuter differences count for nothing in comparison with one fundamental variation, which in effect divided all the new systems, in spite of their superficial resemblance, into two, or at the most three, categories.

In some states the popular representative body—the Lower House—was endowed with such powers that it became the real determining factor in the government of the nation, so that the spirit and direction of national policy was genuinely determined by its will, while its will was in its turn moulded by a real and free movement of public opinion. In these cases alone could it be said that popular government, in any full sense, had been established. In other countries, while the representative body might criticise and discuss, and might reject proposals of legislation or of taxation, it was not permitted to exercise any control, in form or in fact, over the executive. The direction of national policy in these cases remained effectively in the hands of a ruling house, or a governing class, which, instead of being controlled by public opinion, could aspire to direct the movement of public opinion along channels convenient to its own aims. In these cases, though government might find it necessary to consult and to cultivate the representative body, as a means of feeling the nation's pulse and seeing how far it dare go, it cannot be said that national self-government was genuinely established. To these two outstanding types we may perhaps add a third, represented by countries where the legal power of control was formally lodged with the representative body, but where, for one reason or another, and generally because of the absence of unity of sentiment or of political intelligence in the mass of the electorate, the representative body itself became the creature of a clique or a sect, a race or a person. The three types shade into one another, and the cynical observer can always trace the defects of the third type in the other two. But it is useful to distinguish them, as a means of broad classification.

Of the first type the supreme example was Britain, where, whatever the dissatisfied critic of British politics might say, there did exist the most complete freedom of discussion, so that public opinion, an ever-varying quantity, was genuinely the outcome of the free fermentation of the national mind ; and where, more important, it was impossible that the main direction of national policy should be in direct conflict with this freely formed national will arising out of unceasing discussion. The other examples of this type in 1878 (apart from the United States and the British self-governing colonies) were France, Italy, Belgium, and Holland. Of the second type the supreme example was Germany. In 1878 the Scandinavian countries also approximated to this type ; but the authority of the Kings of Sweden and Denmark was never so independent as that of the German Emperor, principally because they lacked his exclusive control over the army and the bureaucracy. Of the third type, the Austrian Empire formed perhaps the best example, since here a parliamentary system was actually turned into the means of imposing upon a majority the detested will of a minority. In different ways Spain and most of the Balkan states fell into the same category. These have been the instances in which the parliamentary system has had the most unhappy results, but their evils were not yet perceptible in 1878.

These distinctions are so important that it will be worth while to examine with some closeness the development and working of these contrasted systems in typical cases drawn from among the leading states ; and as in nearly all cases the systems set up in this period have continued in full force until to-day, we shall in fact be describing the main existing systems of government.

We shall choose Germany, Austria, France, and Britain; and it will be convenient to deal with them in that order.

Germany

Slight and ineffective as were the powers allowed to the Prussian Parliament by the constitution of 1850, there was one among them which was capable of being used as a lever for the establishment of parliamentary supremacy. Although Parliament could not, as in Britain, withhold all supplies and thus make a government of which it disapproved impotent, its approval was required for new taxes; and in an age of steadily increasing public expenditure, this power, boldly used, might ultimately have won supremacy for Parliament. In the 'fifties and 'sixties the Liberal movement was still strong in Prussia; the elections always returned a Liberal majority. As soon as a favourable opportunity presented itself, the Liberal majority in the Prussian Landtag was ready to make full use of it. This determination brought on a fierce struggle, which lasted from 1859 to 1866. It was very keenly fought, and very nearly gave a crushing victory to the Liberal cause. If it had done so, the whole subsequent history of Germany and of Europe would have been different. But the Liberals were disastrously defeated, and their defeat established impregnably the ascendancy of the Prussian monarchy and its supporters.

In the year 1859, under the influence of the Franco-Austrian War in Italy, the Regent William of Prussia (afterwards the King and Emperor William I.) carried out, with the advice of his War Minister, von Roon, a far-reaching reorganisation and enlargement of the Prussian army: it was this reform scheme which enabled

Prussia to win her victories over Austria and France. But the scheme involved a large additional expenditure, for which the approval of the Landtag was asked. The Liberal majority in the Landtag, holding that Prussia was not threatened by any other power, and not sharing the belief of the Prussian ruling classes in the doctrines of brute force, saw no reason for a great and costly addition to the army. It therefore voted the requisite funds only provisionally, for a single year. The representatives of the Crown vainly urged that the organisation of the army was exclusively a question for the king to decide, and that the Landtag had no right to interfere: the Landtag's reply was that no money for an increased army should be forthcoming after 1859. The government levied the necessary taxes in defiance of the Landtag, and dissolved the refractory assembly. The electors returned an increased majority, which declined as firmly as ever to sanction the new taxes. A second dissolution and a second election brought back a still more sweeping Liberal majority, despite all that the bureaucrats could do to influence the polls, and the government proposals were actually thrown out by a majority of eight to one. When such a result was obtained in a house elected on the three-class system, there can be no doubt that the vast majority of the Prussian people were resolved to resist the extension of military power, and to assert the supremacy of the representative body. William I. (who had now succeeded to the throne) thought the situation so serious that he had almost decided to abdicate. If he had done so, or if he had given way, Prussia might have ceased to be a militarist state.

As a last resort, the king called to power in 1862 the most fearless, ruthless, and unbending of Prussian

Junkers, Otto von Bismarck. Realising that Prussianism and the Hohenzollern autocracy were fighting for life, Bismarck defied the Landtag and all its electoral supporters. He told the angry Liberals that it was not for them to express an opinion on the requisite size and organisation of the army, and that when the king, whose sole prerogative it was, had decided that an increase was necessary, the Landtag was exceeding its power if it refused to find the money. As it still refused, and went on refusing for four more years, he simply collected the necessary taxes on the authority of the Upper House alone. He was able to do so, because he was master of the bureaucracy and of the army. In Britain a citizen compelled to pay an illegal tax can sue the tax-collectors in the law courts, and will certainly obtain a favourable decision. No such remedy was open to the Prussian subject. For four years Bismarck continued to flout and defy the Landtag and the vast body of public opinion which supported it, not only in Prussia but throughout Germany and Europe ; and, by doing so, showed that the parliamentary system afforded no real restriction upon the Hohenzollern despotism. For if even the control over new taxation could be thus disregarded with impunity, what was the value of any of the other still more shadowy powers defined by the constitution of 1850 ? Newspapers assailed this tyrannous overriding of the law ; they were suppressed by force. Electors sent up petitions in support of their representatives ; they were prosecuted before administrative courts, and smartly fined.

Meanwhile Bismarck was pursuing with ruthless daring a foreign policy whose obvious aim was to bring about a war with Austria ; and every step in this policy was

detestable in the eyes of most Prussians and of all non-Prussian Germans. The Landtag protested. They were told that foreign policy was no concern of theirs. They thundered in favour of peace, and friendship with Austria, and the rights of Schleswig and Holstein. They were told that they were sentimental windbags, and that the greatness of Prussia and of Germany was not to be attained by resolutions and parliamentary discussions, but in the good old Prussian way, 'by blood and iron.' The antithesis between the historic methods of the Prussian monarchy and the ideals of nineteenth-century civilisation could not be more clearly expressed than they were in this long debate.

But Bismarck was unaffected by debates or by the condemnation of public opinion. By means which revolted the mind and conscience of all Germany, he was preparing an opportunity for carving out new territories for Prussia by the use of the army which had been created in defiance of the popular will. He made friends with Russia by helping her to suppress the Polish rebels of 1863, with whom all Germany sympathised. He imposed the Prussian yoke on Schleswig and Holstein, in defiance of the desires of the people of the duchies, and the sentiment of all Europe, and the provisions of the Treaty of 1852 to which Prussia had been a party. Out of the Schleswig-Holstein question he manufactured a pretext for war with Austria. The bulk of Prussian opinion was against him, but the manhood of Prussia was under the iron discipline of the army, and had to serve as his instrument. Non-Prussian Germany was against him, and nearly all the states took arms on the side of Austria. But the weapon which the king and von Roon had forged was now ready for use, and it was

irresistible. Austria was crushed in six weeks. The kingdom of Hanover and the electorate of Hesse, whose only offence was that they had obeyed the order of the Germanic Diet and the will of the whole German nation in taking up arms against the tyrant power, were overrun and declared annexed to Prussia. The free city of Frankfort, the ancient capital of the Germanic Confederation, was occupied by Prussian forces, and treated as Brussels was treated in 1914; its senators were imprisoned as hostages, and a huge war contribution was exacted under the threat that the city would be burnt down.

Never was so complete, so dramatic, or so villainous a triumph. The ancient methods of Prussia, the methods of force and fraud, were justified by success. Prussia and Germany gasped—and gave up their dreams of liberty. For if these dazzling triumphs were to be won by disregarding the shibboleths of parliamentarism, what good Prussian, or what German nationalist, could any longer respect the old Liberal formulæ? The parliamentary opposition subsided like a pricked bladder. With his tongue in his cheek, Bismarck accepted an indemnification for his unconstitutional action. He had won his victory. Self-government in Prussia remained a sham; and the old forces which had carved out the greatness of Prussia in the past by force and fraud were enthroned again, to carve out the new greatness of united Germany by the same means. By paying a mere lip-service to it, Prussianism had conquered, transformed, and enslaved Liberalism. In an amazing way the empty forms of self-government continued to cajole and deceive not only the Germans themselves, but the rest of the world; but under the cover of these forms, a wolf in

sheep's clothing, Prussianism stood as the supreme and triumphant enemy of everything that is implied in the ideals of self-government, as of all that is best in the ideals of nationalism and internationalism.

Bismarck's final triumph, the imposition of the bureaucratic and military domination of the Hohenzollerns upon the whole German nation, followed from this initial victory. The simple and ingenious constitutional devices whereby this was achieved were first worked out in the constitution of the North German Confederation in 1867, and perfected in the constitution of the German Empire in 1871, which has since remained unchanged. Germany found herself equipped with a representative assembly, or Reichstag, elected by universal suffrage; for, having learned how easily parliamentary opposition could be stultified if the executive power was given sufficient independence, Bismarck was clever enough not to irritate public opinion by any such tricky device as that of the three classes in the Prussian franchise. Thus a highly democratic system seemed to be the gift of the conqueror to united Germany, and the Liberals were cajoled into thinking that their cause had triumphed.

But alongside of the Reichstag was set the Bundesrat, or Federal Council, consisting of a small number of representatives of the various states in the Empire; and on the plea that it was the guardian of state-rights and of the federal system, it was given far more extensive powers than the Reichstag. Its members were not elected, but were the nominees of the various state governments. They possessed as individuals no independent rights of deliberation, but were required to vote, like ambassadors at a Congress, strictly according to the instructions of the governments which appointed them. Prussia did

not even obtain a majority of the votes, though she possessed a majority of the population of the empire, and this had an air of remarkable moderation. Having only seventeen of the fifty-one members, she required to secure ten additional votes to get her own way. But the preponderant influence of the Emperor over the minor princes of the empire could be trusted always to ensure that a sufficient margin of votes would be 'instructed' according to his desires. Hence, in fact though not in form, the Emperor was put into the position of being able to dictate the decisions of the Bundesrat beforehand; and that body, whose function was, in theory, to represent and protect the independence of the minor states, became, in fact, the chief means of imposing the will of Prussia upon them. The Bundesrat deliberates in secret, and its president is the Chancellor, the head of the imperial executive, a nominee of the Emperor. It has a number of standing committees. There is a Prussian majority on every committee but one. The exception is the Foreign Relations Committee, which has no Prussian members; but this is because, under the constitution, foreign relations fall under the exclusive control of the Emperor, so that the Committee is a merely formal body, which seldom meets.

To a body such as the Bundesrat it was safe to allow a considerable degree of nominal power, because there was no fear that it would be independently used; the Bundesrat has proved to be, in fact, little more than a means of registering the decrees of the Prussian masters of Germany, and of checking the activity of the Reichstag. The Reichstag in its turn has never been much more than a pretentious debating society. Its consent was required for new laws and new taxes, as was that of the

Prussian Landtag under the constitution of 1850, but these powers have proved to be as unreal in the one case as in the other. In practice it has been limited to the discussion of the legislative and financial proposals of the government, and at the most it sometimes succeeds in modifying or amending them; but as it has been from the first divided into many parties, the government has nearly always succeeded in getting its own way by a judicious distribution of favours. Over the executive government the Reichstag has had no control whatever. All ministers and members of the imperial service were, and are, appointed by the Crown alone, and though they were empowered to attend the Reichstag, they were not members of it or responsible to it. Over the general direction and aims of national policy the representative body of the German Empire obtained no power at all; it was from the first little more than a veil drawn over the Hohenzollern dictatorship of Germany.

This dictatorship depended, as always, upon the control of the army and the bureaucracy; and the means by which Bismarck extended this control from Prussia to the whole of Germany are worth noting. So far as concerns the army, they were quite simple and direct. The imperial constitution provided that the King of Prussia, as hereditary Emperor, should be sole master and commander of the armies of the empire; the Prussian system was extended to all the other states, and their forces passed under the Emperor's direct control: he was the 'supreme War Lord.' The three kingdoms of Bavaria, Saxony, and Würtemburg were indeed permitted to retain for some purposes a nominally distinct organisation; but their system was to be identical, the Emperor was given inspecting powers in time of peace, and as

soon as war began his command became unqualified: the chief relic of independence then surviving would be the issue of separate casualty lists. This absolute mastery over the whole military force of Germany (which means the whole of German manhood), and the power of declaring war and peace which goes with it, formed the core of the Hohenzollern dominion, and rendered the achievement of any substantial change in the system extremely difficult.

How the Emperor himself regards his position the present Emperor has made very plain: a few of his phrases form, in fact, an excellent summary of the essence of the modern German system. 'The one pillar on which the empire rests is the army.' 'It is my business alone to declare if there shall be war.' 'The more I get behind party cries, the more firmly and surely do I count on my army.' 'The soldier has not to have a will of his own; you must all indeed have one will, but that is my will; there is only one law, and that is my law.' Here is, in truth, the root fact of the German system. Fundamentally, under all its disguises, it was a military autocracy which the constitution of 1871 established. And the men who worked this tremendous military engine were mainly the old Junker class of Prussia. They gradually and easily assimilated the members of the corresponding classes in the other German states, but all the important commands were kept in Prussian hands. Military supremacy belonged not only to an autocratic sovereign, but was wielded on his behalf by a rigid caste, inspired by a long tradition of ascendancy and of the extension of power by brute force.

The method by which the control of Prussia was extended over the bureaucracy of the other German states

was more subtle, but in the long run not less effective, than that by which she obtained control over their armies. Bismarck did not attempt to create a great imperial bureaucratic system under centralised control, because this would have aroused the jealousy of the minor states. He preferred to maintain only a small imperial staff of officials under the direction of the Imperial Chancellor, and to entrust the execution of imperial laws to the local bureaucracies of the various states. This appeared to be a concession to local independence. But the result was that, as the executants of imperial laws, the Bavarian and Saxon bureaucrats found themselves subjected to the supervision and the increasingly close control of the central officials, who were practically all Prussians. The bureaucracy throughout Germany was by this means steadily Prussianised, and its members became in fact quite as much the agents of the King of Prussia as of their local princes.

Thus, as in 1850, so in 1871, the adoption of constitutional forms, under Bismarck's clever direction, proved to be not a source of weakness but a source of increased strength to the old governing factors of Prussia. It did not dethrone them, or subject them to any effective limitation ; it gave them the appearance of being genuine organs of the national will. And so what appeared on the surface as the triumph of the principles of self-government in the state in which, beyond all others, this triumph seemed most improbable, was in reality the gravest defeat which the cause of self-government had yet suffered.

Austria-Hungary

The political history of the Austro-Hungarian Empire since the beginning of the constitutional régime in 1860

has been extremely complex and bewildering, but certain broad conclusions emerge from a survey of it. In the first place, parliamentary government was ineffective from the beginning, especially in the Austrian half of the empire. The chief cause of this ineffectiveness was the bitter strife which raged, and still rages, between the numerous and mutually hostile nationalities of which the empire is composed. On a small scale we have in Britain experienced something of this difficulty, and there have been moments when the specifically nationalist aims of the Irish party, and in a less degree the nationalist bias of Scottish and Welsh groups, have seemed to threaten the breakdown of the parliamentary machine. But the extraordinary medley of conflicting peoples who make up the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and their virulent antipathies, present a problem to which neither Britain nor indeed any other European state affords any analogy. And the most cursory study of the politics of that empire illustrates more cogently and more clearly than perhaps any other body of political facts the truth of the contention upon which we have so often insisted, that a parliamentary system can only work efficiently in a state which is unified by a prevailing and deeply rooted national sentiment. Where this does not exist, either the parliamentary system becomes merely a mechanism for the enforcement of the supremacy of one nationality over its fellows, or the old organs of government, the monarchy, the bureaucracy, and the army, are enabled to maintain their effective control over the general direction of the policy of the State. In various degrees both of these results happened in the Austrian Empire; and in this case the adoption of a representative system did not bring liberty, mutual sympathy, and the supremacy of

the public will, but chaos, racial tyranny, and the survival of the old dynastic control of the resources of the State for dynastic ends.

When, after the defeats of 1859 and 1866, the Habsburg monarchy, hitherto the most obstinate defender of absolutism, found itself compelled to yield to the clamour for the institutions of self-government, there was one system which might have brought peace, and taught the conflicting nationalities to co-operate for the common advantage. This might have been the result of a federal system, allowing a high degree of autonomy to the various nationalities, while a common military system, a common tariff and a common foreign policy were maintained under co-operative control. But such a solution was inconsistent with the traditions and aims of the two ruling races, the German-Austrians and the Magyars.

Accordingly, the Compromise of 1867 divided the empire into two distinct and independent States, one for each of the two ruling races. Each State had its own Parliament, its own responsible ministry, and its separate finance, and they were linked together only by a ruling dynasty, and by an agreement (subject to revision from time to time) for common action in the three spheres of foreign affairs, defence, and the provision of the funds necessary for these purposes. The control of these common affairs, and of the ministries which dealt with them, was entrusted to 'delegations' of sixty members each from the two Parliaments; but in order to emphasise the separation of the two realms, these 'delegations' were to meet separately, and to communicate with one another only in writing. If, therefore, we would understand the real nature of the system established in Austria-Hungary in 1867, it is necessary to consider each of the

two States separately, and also their common action. And as, in all its main features, the system has remained unchanged from that day to this, our analysis may well be made to refer to the whole period since 1867.

In Hungary the Parliament was elected on a nominally wide suffrage by the direct votes of the electors in all the districts of the country, Croat, Slovak, and Rumanian as well as Magyar. But although the Magyars formed much less than one-half of the population, they have always possessed an overwhelming majority in the elected house, and this for two main reasons. In the first place, the electors were required to be able to speak Magyar, and many of them were unable, and sometimes from patriotic motives refused, to use the language of the dominant race. In the second place, all the leading officials who controlled the elections were Magyars, and they never hesitated deliberately to falsify the returns, sometimes going so far as forcibly to exclude Slovak or other voters from the polling booths : there is probably no country in which interference with elections has been carried on so unblushingly as in Hungary.[1] Accordingly, the Hungarian Parliament did not represent, and was not intended to represent, the peoples of Hungary ; it represented practically only the dominant race, and all its powers were used continuously and openly for the purpose of securing the racial ascendancy of the Magyars, and forcing the non-Magyar peoples into a Magyar mould. There were many parties in the Hungarian Parliament, and some of them called themselves Liberal. They have differed on economic questions, on religious questions, and, above all, in the degree of jealousy with which they

[1] See Mr. Seton-Watson's books, especially *Electoral Corruption in Hungary*.

regarded the connection with Austria. But they have all agreed in pursuing the policy of racial dominance, in refusing to recognise any language but their own, in reserving to themselves all important public offices, in forcing the schools to teach Magyar, in punishing 'disloyal' provinces like Croatia by depriving them, for example, of railway facilities. It would be difficult to find in the annals of despotism a more unresting and systematic tyranny than that which has been imposed by the Magyar majority in the Hungarian Parliament upon the great majority of the inhabitants of the country which that Parliament is supposed to represent. It was perhaps natural that a vigorous race with proud traditions, finding itself in danger of being swamped by other races whom it regarded as its inferiors, should use all means, legitimate or illegitimate, to maintain its supremacy. But comprehensible though it may be, the rule of a racial minority constitutes a worse form of tyranny than the rule of an autocratic prince. Moreover, it aroused a steadily intensifying bitterness. So long as the Magyars and the Slavs of Hungary were the common subjects of an alien despotism, it seemed not impossible that they might learn to live together in amity. The parliamentary system, worked in the interests of a single racial group, has produced among them an irreconcilable antipathy, and has made it appear that peace and justice can never be established among these peoples until the Hungarian State is broken up into its component elements. The Hungarian Parliament exercises a real control over the government of the country, and the ministers have always been drawn from the party or group of parties forming a majority. But, in spite of that, the parliamentary system in Hungary has not meant liberty, but tyranny.

In the Austrian half of the monarchy the conditions have been different, but not much more happy. Here, until 1906, the Reichsrat or Parliament was not elected directly by the voters, but by the Diets or local assemblies of the seventeen provinces; and as these in some degree represent distinct nationalities (Czechs in Bohemia, Poles in Galicia, Slovenes in Carinthia), it followed that the subordinate nationalities were from the first better represented in the Austrian than in the Hungarian Parliament. But the provincial Diets themselves were not democratically elected. They were chosen by defined classes—landowners, townspeople, and peasants; and the system was carefully arranged so as to give a disproportionate weight to those classes, and to those districts in the non-German regions, in which the German element was strongest. Consequently, though the Germans were greatly outnumbered in Austria as a whole, they were generally able to command a majority in the Reichsrat. From this arose much bitterness and long strife, especially between the Germans and the Czechs of Bohemia; and the Germans for a time maintained their ascendancy only by an alliance with the Poles of Galicia, to whom they granted a large degree of local autonomy, as the price of their support. The Germans themselves and, in a less degree, the other nationalities also, were further divided into numerous parties; it is possible to enumerate between twenty and thirty organised parties in the Austrian Reichsrat.

This chaos of parties had two striking results. In the first place, it practically left in the hands of the Crown the choice of ministers. According to the constitution, the ministers were to be responsible to Parliament. But they have not been, and could not be, selected from the

majority in Parliament, because none of the numerous parties ever had a majority. Hence the responsibility of ministers has been an unreality. In actual fact, the Crown has been able to select its own ministers, choosing them first from one group and then from another; and the chosen ministers could proceed to make a majority by bargaining with the various groups. When a ministry became unpopular, it could be dismissed and displaced by another drawn from some other group. The defeated ministry got the discredit of its failure; but the Crown was nearly always able to secure what it desired from one group or another, as the price of office. Thus, despite the theory of ministerial responsibility, the ministers were far more fully the agents of the Crown than of Parliament, and under the semblance of parliamentary supremacy the dynasty continued to be the one stable and unchanging factor in Austrian politics, pursuing steadily its purely dynastic policy. Here is one of the most striking demonstrations of the fact that the existence of a multitude of parties renders extremely difficult the establishment of an effective parliamentary control of government.

The second result of this parliamentary chaos was that in the actual business of daily administration the bureaucratic service, which was and is predominantly German, continued to enjoy a very high degree of independence and freedom of action. Older than Parliament, and working among a population which had for centuries been habituated to its authority, the bureaucracy regarded itself, under the system of 1867 as under the earlier despotism, as the servant not of the people but of the Crown; nor has it ever been reduced to any real subordination to the parliamentary system.

Thus while in Hungary the racial ascendancy of a minority expressed itself through parliamentary forms, in Austria the political chaos which resulted from national disunity enabled the dynasty, by the exercise of patience and subtlety in playing off the races one against another, to retain most of its old ascendancy, and in particular to preserve control over the bureaucratic service. In neither half of the Dual Monarchy has the government been carried on in accord with the opinions and desires of the community as a whole; because the community as a whole, being deeply disunited, could have no clearly defined or predominant body of opinion or desires; and in the midst of its discordant wranglings, the spoils of real power were carried off partly by the monarchy, partly by the Magyars.

This result exhibited itself equally in the direction of the common affairs of the two States. Here, indeed, the influence of the dynasty was greater than elsewhere, because the dynasty was the only visible bond holding together two States which had few interests in common. By one of the fundamental provisions of the *Ausgleich* of 1867, the joint army of Austria and Hungary was placed under the sole and undivided command of the Emperor-King. This military dictatorship was indeed the main force which held this strange political structure together; and that is the significance of the saying that 'Austria-Hungary is not a State, but only a dynasty and an army.' Foreign policy also in a special degree remained under the influence of the monarchy. It was but a feeble and wavering control over these vitally important powers that could be exercised by the delegations from the two Parliaments; and the mere fact that the two delegations did not form a single body, but arrived at

separate decisions and could only discuss their differences in writing, threw all the more power into the hands of the one permanent and stable element in the system, the Crown.

From the first, however, there was a marked contrast between the two delegations. The Austrian delegation represented several different races and provinces, who were generally at cross-purposes. The Hungarian delegation was a compact body, guided by the clearly defined and dominant purpose of the Magyars. Their aim was racial ascendancy. But this aim had a very direct bearing upon foreign affairs. It was, and is, the supreme interest of the Magyars that their subjects, Rumans, Croats, and Serbs, should not be stimulated to independence by the influence of independent states of their own blood beyond the border of the monarchy. The Magyar was the sworn foe of the Slav, because he lived in constant fear of his own Slav subjects; and his chief interest in foreign affairs was to secure, if possible, the weakening of the independent Slav states outside the monarchy. This made the Magyars ready to join in the most daring adventures, such as the annexation of Bosnia in 1908, the successive threats to Serbia, and finally the desperate throw of the present war. But this Magyar point of view was in entire accord with the traditional desire of the Habsburg monarchy to expand southwards at the expense of Serbia towards Salonika, and with its ancient jealousy of Russia. There could be no such clear fixity of purpose among the mixed peoples who were represented in the Austrian delegation; and for that reason the Magyars exercised an increasing influence in foreign affairs, and the Emperor tended more and more to throw himself into their hands, to select his foreign ministers

from among them, and even, as it seemed, to submit to their dictation. Certainly it was the Magyar point of view which most deeply influenced the foreign policy of the Dual Monarchy, and allowed it to become the tool of German ambitions; though this policy also had the support of most of the German-Austrians. There cannot be a shadow of doubt that if the will and desires of the great majority among the peoples of the monarchy had exercised any weight at all in the direction of its policy, the foreign policy of the monarchy, during the whole of the period since 1867, but especially during the years since 1890, would have been governed by quite different ideas and principles. And if this is true, then, despite the elaborate paraphernalia of representative institutions established in 1867, the people of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were not, in the most vital matters, endowed with the right of self-government; and this empire may be regarded as providing the clearest example of the way in which parliamentary institutions may be distorted to serve special interests and private ends.

France

While in Germany and Austria the forms of representative government were being turned into the implements of forces which did not represent the public will, in France, as a result of the Franco-Prussian War and the political revolution which it caused, a fully representative system, effectively under the control of the nation, was for the first time being established.

The empire of Napoleon III., although it rested upon a democratic basis, and was supported by occasional appeals to the popular vote, gave to the nation, in fact, no control whatsoever over the organs of government. There were,

indeed, bodies called the Senate and the Legislative Body, but they enjoyed no real power. The Senate was nominated by the Emperor. The Legislative Body, which was popularly elected, was not permitted to initiate laws, but only to discuss them ; its assent was necessary for the annual budget, but it had to pass or reject each section of it as a whole, and as total rejection was impossible, this meant that it had no control over finance ; over the executive it had no shadow of control. Finally, its debates were not allowed to be published, except in an official summary prepared by government, so that it could not influence the nation. The elections were controlled by government ; there were official candidates in every constituency, whose expenses were paid by the State, and all election meetings were forbidden. Government formed and revised the electoral districts at its own pleasure, and the returning officers, who were government officials, took the ballot-boxes home with them during the polling ! At the same time the Press was very strictly controlled ; any newspaper might be 'warned' or suppressed by government without any possibility of appeal, and the censorship of theatres forbade even the most remote political allusion. To all this was added an elaborate system of police espionage, such that any person was liable to be arrested as a suspect if he was heard to express dangerous political opinions. Under this system—which was supported and confirmed by universal suffrage—political life practically died out between the time of Napoleon's *coup d'état* in 1851 and 1860. Yet even under this hideous denial of liberty the free spirit of France made itself heard. Brave men contrived, in spite of all obstacles, to get themselves elected to the Legislative Body, and discussed in its sessions the

problems of government as openly as they dared. And meanwhile the revolutionary spirit, always endemic in France, was driven underground, tempted to adopt more and more extreme ideas, and to prepare a resort to mere violence and destruction.

During the last ten years of his reign (1860-70), Napoleon III. was driven, by the non-success of his foreign policy, and especially by the alienation of the Church, on whose support he largely rested, to make gradual concessions to the liberal idea. He reduced the restrictions on the Press, and permitted greater freedom of discussion in the Legislative Body. In 1868 he allowed political meetings to be held, provided that a government representative, empowered to stop the proceedings, was always present. In 1869 new elections created a powerful opposition in the Legislative Body; and after a good deal of hesitation Napoleon decided to choose a ministry from among the leaders of the strongest party, whose aim was to turn the empire into a parliamentary monarchy of the British type. At the beginning of 1870 it seemed that the persistence of French Liberalism had at last won its victory, and that the French people had at last begun to regain the power of controlling, through their representatives, the conduct and policy of government.

But at this unhappy moment came the disaster of the Franco-Prussian War. Before the end of 1870 Paris was besieged; German armies occupied the whole of Northern France; the empire with all its institutions was swept away by the unanimous will of the people whom it had ruined; and the unhappy nation, in the midst of its agony, had to improvise a government to negotiate with the victorious enemy. For this purpose a single-chamber assembly was elected—elected while half of the country

was actually occupied by the enemy; and upon this body fell the task not only of deciding the terms of peace, but of making a new system of government. Chosen by universal suffrage at a time of deep depression and disillusionment, the Assembly consisted inevitably, for the most part, of men who had little political experience; and it was divided into a number of parties, among whom were included adherents of all the various monarchical régimes through which France had passed during the century. The monarchists of various schools commanded a majority, and at first it seemed almost certain that the old historic Bourbon monarchy would be restored, though under great constitutional restrictions. Only the austere impracticability of the exiled head of the old ruling house, indeed, prevented his restoration; and the unwillingness of his partisans to abandon all hope led to long delays: for this reason the Assembly prolonged its existence for more than five years. In the end, the settlement, when it came, had to be in some degree a compromise.

The constitution of the Third Republic, as it was drawn up in 1875, was not defined in a single logical document such as each of the earlier revolutions had produced; it was embodied in a series of piecemeal measures. But this element of compromise, this absence of finality and rigidity, though it caused at the time much irritation to the logical French mind, was, in the long run, a source of strength rather than of weakness. It meant that the system was shaped gradually, and retained a certain elasticity, so that it could change and grow as the mind of the nation changed and grew. And that, perhaps, is part of the reason why it has lasted so much longer than any French system since 1789, and has, on the whole, in spite of all the difficulties it has had to face, in spite of the cruel circum-

stances in which it arose, in spite of the unceasing criticisms which have been directed against it, become an accepted part of the nation's life, as none of its predecessors ever succeeded in becoming.

As if the troubles of France were not already great enough, the labours of the Assembly were disturbed almost at the outset by the aimless and reckless outburst of mere revolutionary insanity which is known as the Paris Commune. This rising was the product of the revolutionary spirit which modern French history had nurtured, and which the exaggerated repression of Napoleon III. had intensified: it was born of the belief that mob violence could somehow achieve vague, wonderful results, and of the reckless misery due to the siege. No definite principles inspired it. The nearest approach to an idea displayed by its leaders was contained in the demand that every commune (there are 40,000 communes in France) should have 'absolute communal autonomy,'[1] and the unity of France was, in some undefined way, to be assured by the co-operation of those communes which 'adhered to the contract.' What communal autonomy meant the Communists showed in Paris itself, where they disarmed and terrorised the vast majority who disapproved of their proceedings. The Commune had to be overthrown by bloody street-fighting; and it is not surprising that the government dealt very severely with these madmen who were tearing France asunder, for no reason capable of definition or defence, at a time when she was suffering from the agony of alien conquest. More than 7000 were killed; 13,000 were

[1] This folly was reproduced at Cronstadt during the Russian revolution of 1917, which, indeed, presents many instructive parallels to the French movements of 1848 and 1871.

sentenced to transportation or other severe penalties. And it was with the record of this horrible episode that the history of the free Republic began. No system of government has ever started under less hopeful auspices, or amid greater difficulties, than the new system of the defeated and disheartened French nation.

Yet the Third Republic, born in such gloom, has in fact given to France what had been given to her by none of her earlier experiments—freedom, and a machinery of self-government so complete that the nation was henceforth fully able to shape its own destinies.

The new sovereign body consisted of a Parliament of two Houses. The Upper House, or Senate, was elected by all persons chosen by the people to serve in a representative capacity, whether in central or in local government; and at first it included also a number of life members, who were later allowed gradually to disappear. The Lower House, or Chamber, was directly elected by universal suffrage. The two Houses sitting together under the name of the Assembly formed the sovereign ruling body of France; the Assembly alone could alter the fundamental articles of the constitution; the Assembly also was to elect the President of the Republic. Thus the American precedent of direct election of the President by popular vote, which France had reproduced with disastrous results in 1848, was abandoned; and the President was made to feel that he was dependent upon the elected Houses. Moreover, the President's powers were carefully limited, so as to guard against any repetition of Napoleon's *coup d'état*. His functions were closely modelled upon those of the king in Britain, with this difference, that they were defined by law, not regulated by custom. He must always act through ministers; and

the body of ministers must form a coherent Cabinet, jointly responsible to the Chambers. This meant that in the new French system Parliament was to have as full a mastery over the whole conduct of government as it possessed in the British system. Custom has prescribed that, as in the British system, it is the Lower House alone which makes and unmakes ministries. Broadly speaking, the new French system was modelled on the British system as closely as it was possible for a system deliberately created to reproduce the features of a system which had grown up gradually, and rested mainly upon custom.

But there was one broad difference between the two systems in actual practice. While the British Parliament and the British people were divided by long habit into two great parties, the French Parliament and people were from the first broken up into many parties, partly owing to the accidents of French history, partly perhaps because of the more logical and less compromising nature of the French mind. No one of these parties has ever by itself possessed a clear majority, and this has had certain effects, which must necessarily be produced in any system wherein this feature occurs. In the first place, the power of the President is increased, because it falls to him to choose whom he shall call upon to form a ministry ; and there may often be several men who might equally well be called upon. In the British system there is rarely any doubt : the leader of the party which has a majority in the House of Commons must be called in, even though he be personally distasteful to the king. If there were many small parties, instead of two great ones, in the British system, the king's personal preferences or sympathies would often count for a good deal. In the second place, any ministry, if it is to command a majority, must

have the support of several groups ; and this necessitates a bargaining for support, which may sometimes lead to unhappy results : the small group which has itself no hope of enjoying power may be tempted to obtain favours in return for its votes, and the ministry may be tempted to pay the price required. Such bargaining is often honest enough ; but it is not always so, and some of the most unsatisfactory features of the parliamentary régime in France have been due to this cause. And, finally, the ministries thus formed, being at the mercy of combinations which may dissolve as rapidly as they are formed, are apt to be short-lived. They succeed one another with kaleidoscopic rapidity. The public mind is bewildered, and often fails to follow their actions, often does not even know by whom it is governed. Government loses prestige and strength and stability. And these rapidly changing ministers, who flit in and out of the great departments of State, are often unable to exercise a controlling influence over their permanent officials : they have no sooner got a grasp of the work of their office than they are replaced. This brings the unhappy result that the control of Parliament over the bureaucracy, which is primarily exercised through the parliamentary heads of the great departments, is apt to become ineffective. The bureaucracy of France, created by the great Napoleon, has remained under the Third Republic, almost as fully as under the systems which preceded it, the most stable, active, efficient, and persistent element in the government of the country. Although it has now learned to regard itself as the servant of the nation, and no longer (as always before) as the servant of a ruling prince, it is still very independent. Indeed, it is perhaps more independent than it used to be, since the rapidly

changing parliamentary chiefs cannot supervise its activities as closely as the ministers of a despotic régime.

But the political ingenuity of the French has found a remedy (though only a partial remedy) for this last defect, by setting up parliamentary committees for the chief departments; and these committees receive far fuller information in detail about the proceedings of the departments than is usually given to the British House of Commons. And this system actually draws advantage from the weakness and from the rapid changes of French ministries. Not only are the ministers unable to resist inquiry, as British ministries, by the use of their standing majorities, are often able to do; but just because there are so many men who have served their turn in office, every French Parliament contains a larger number of members with official experience than any British Parliament; and, of course, the man with some official experience is, *ceteris paribus*, likely to be a more useful member of such a committee than the man without it. Thus the French system has brought about a far more methodical and direct control over the bureaucracy by the representative body than the British system has hitherto made possible. But this does not fully counterbalance the relative weakness of the French cabinets.

In yet another way the bureaucratic character of French government was qualified by the system of 1871. It brought about the real beginning of self-government in the local sphere, by establishing in the areas of local administration—communes, *arrondissements* and departments—elected councils, and in the lowest grade also elected *maires*, to supervise and co-operate with the bureaucratic officials who had hitherto controlled the

whole machinery of local government. The practice of local self-government, which is a habit of centuries in Britain, could not be established or made effective in a moment against the widely different traditions of France, and its advocates wisely avoided the wholesale experiments which had plunged the country into confusion in 1791. The bureaucratic official, reporting to and controlled by the authorities in Paris, remained, and still remains, the predominant factor, as he has never been in Britain. But at least the co-operation of the ordinary citizen began to be enlisted to an extent never attempted since 1791, and the French people began to acquire that experience of the art of self-government in local affairs which exercises so sanative an effect upon the working of selr-government on the national scale.

The system of the Third Republic has been the object of incessant criticism ; and in some respects its results have been regarded with a reasonable dissatisfaction even by sincere believers in democratic government. But a too strongly bureaucratic tradition cannot be overcome in a moment, and it takes time for a nation to acquire at once the means and the habit of constant and watchful criticism of its representatives. When all is said, the faults of the system were such as the nation itself had the power to amend. At the worst no French government could now defy the national will, and the national mind had obtained the means of forming a free judgment, and the machinery for expressing it. The nation had become the master of its own destinies, and this could not be said either of the German nation, or of the confused and conflicting peoples of Austria-Hungary.

Britain

While the great continental States were deliberately creating brand-new systems of democratic representative government, more or less genuine in character, Britain, the mother of the parliamentary system, quietly went through the great transition from middle-class rule to democracy, by the Reform Act of 1867, which enfranchised the artisan classes of the towns. But in the case of Britain alone, there was no sudden breach with her traditions, and no material alteration of her political machinery ; only an increase in the size of her electorate. Although the politicians took different views as to the way in which the change should be carried out, and as to the necessity of qualifications or safeguards, in fact the leaders of both of the great political parties were agreed on the main principle. The change was not brought about by any revolutionary upheaval, for although the railings of Hyde Park were broken by a big mass meeting in favour of reform, it is absurd to suppose that the classes in possession of power were moved by fear. They were moved partly by a conviction of the desirability of the change, partly by calculations of party advantage. Nor was the Act of 1867, though it may truly be said to have established democracy in Britain, a logical expression of democratic theory. It was very far from establishing universal suffrage. In truth, it simply admitted to ' active citizenship ' those elements in the nation which had shown, in their trade unions and co-operative ventures, a real capacity for the management of common affairs. These classes were admitted to a full share of control over all the organs of government, if they liked to use it ; just as other elements had been earlier

admitted. And at first the change seemed to make curiously little difference. The parliamentary system worked just as smoothly as before. John Stuart Mill, a convinced Radical, writing some years before the change, had, while advocating a democratic franchise, been haunted by the fear lest the enfranchised democracy might organise a mere class ascendancy. His fears were wholly falsified by the event. The new electorate divided its allegiance between the existing political parties. And Walter Bagehot, writing some five years after the change, could exult in the fact that the old machinery had adapted itself perfectly to the new conditions. Never, even in British history, has a political revolution been more quietly effected. The orderliness, stability and practical efficiency which were the boast of British self-government appeared to be wholly unimpaired. And this contributed to strengthen the prestige of the British system, which was at its highest during this period.

In all spheres, indeed, Britain had now attained the highest point of influence and prestige that she had ever touched in her history. She was by common consent the first of the great powers. Her wealth seemed inexhaustible, and almost all classes of her population were growingly prosperous. She was the world's supreme market, workshop, and bank. Under the guardianship of her fleet, the unchallenged mistress of the seas, her myriad ships were to be seen in all waters, and she held an unapproachable supremacy in world-commerce. Her dominions girdled the earth. She was during these years endowing them, without stint or back-thought, with the institutions of liberty which were her heritage, on a scale which the democrats of Europe might well envy; while with a profitable liberality she threw open every port

and market in her wide domains to the traders of all nations as freely as to her own. Beyond all her other glories was the glory of her freedom. She was the mother of liberty, whose institutions the rest of the world was humbly copying. Resting secure on the deep foundations of her ordered freedom, she alone had no reason to fear disturbance within her own borders, for all the unrest of the early century had gone ; she alone needed to impose no restrictions upon speech or writing, or to regard jealously the formation of associations for the advocacy of political or economic reconstruction ; she alone could offer a safe refuge for the exiles and conspirators of all lands—the Mazzinis and the Marxes—knowing that they could not undermine the loyalty of her sons. Freedom was her note in everything, and what wealth it seemed to have brought her ! To a materialist generation, avid of wealth, her abounding prosperity seemed to demonstrate that freedom *paid*. This was the age of the apotheosis of British institutions.

Naturally the British peoples fell victims to a certain self-complacency regarding the greatness of their country and the perfection of its institutions. This was the time when Palmerston, that typical mid-Victorian British statesman, threw the mantle of British citizenship over the Levantine Jew, Don Pacifico, with the superbly insolent phrase *civis Romanus sum*. And to this period belong two political treatises, still accepted as standard books, which in different ways combined to sing the praises of the British system. There is probably no better way of realising the sense of finality and of satisfaction which during that period the British system inspired than a study of Mill's *Representative Government* (1859) and Bagehot's *English Constitution* (1868). Different

as they were in their methods and in their attitudes of mind, these two very able writers were alike in the calm and almost unconscious assumption that the British system represented the highest achievement of human politics, and that no other system was seriously deserving of study. Mill, indeed, felt some qualms: he showed a sense, far ahead of his age, that the representative system afforded only a very rough and partial reflection of the national mind. But he ventured to declare—an amazing declaration for a philosopher—not only that it was possible to devise an ideal or perfect form of government, but that the parliamentary system was such a form; and it is plain that in his judgment the British system—especially if it were improved by the introduction of Mr. Hare's fantastic scheme of proportional representation, which Mill advocated—almost attained to the ideal. As for Bagehot, his ineffable belief in the utter perfection of the British system was such that he rhapsodised even over its weakest points: his most ecstatic homage was reserved for that omnipresent British snobbery (though he called it by other and prettier names), which seemed to him to be the cement of the whole fabric, and the secret of its strength, majesty and beauty. Perhaps he was not altogether wrong: this characteristic British virtue doubtless helped materially to ease the transition from landowning oligarchy to industrial democracy, kept a fine tradition alive, and led each new partner-class in turn to reproduce the habits of public spirit and public service which centuries of responsibility had bred in the best of the old ruling class.

One of the principal merits of these two books (as of the system which they reflected) was that they definitely discarded the fallacy of the doctrine of 'division of

powers ' between the executive and the legislature, and showed that real success in parliamentary government must depend upon the opposite principle of ' concentration of responsibility.' They made it plain that the real function of a representative body is to control, regulate and criticise the work of the active elements of government ; that such a body must be not only incapable of actually conducting administrative work, but ill-adapted to initiate sound legislative or taxative proposals ; and that legislation and taxation are in most cases best considered in the first instance by the men who are responsible for the direction of affairs, so long as these men carry on their work under unresting supervision. Bagehot especially devoted his admirable gift of lucid analysis to working out a clear account of the simple and delicate machinery—mainly traditional and customary in character—whereby these ends were attained in the British system : notably the Cabinet and its relation to the House of Commons.

But it is remarkable that neither Mill nor Bagehot, acute and practised observers as they were, had anything of importance to say about two of the most significant features of the British system during this period.

In the first place, neither of them in the least degree realised the high importance of the part played in the work of government, including legislation and taxation, by the bureaucrats, or salaried professional administrators of the permanent civil service.[1] Mill has some perfunctory observations on the mode of appointment of civil servants ; Bagehot does not touch on the subject at all. They did not realise that as the sphere of government increased with the increasing complexity of modern

[1] There is an attempt to analyse the development of bureaucracy in Britain in *Peers and Bureaucrats* (Constable, 1910).

life, the importance, and therefore also the independence, of the bureaucrats must increase, even in unbureaucratic Britain. Both held the traditional British view that bureaucracy was a vicious system, essentially hostile to liberty ; they did not see that it had become an indispensable engine of government, and that the days when amateur politicians could adequately deal with all the problems of government were gone for ever. They shared the current view that the functions of government ought to be reduced to the minimum. Yet even in their own days the bureaucrats of the Poor Law Board and the Home Office were in fact determining the character and direction of British social policy ; the bureaucrats of the Colonial Office, like Sir James Stephen, had a principal part in the shaping of the new colonial policy which was one of the greatest achievements of this generation ; and these and other departments were very little considered or discussed in Parliament. Moreover, it was in this period (in 1858 and the following years) that the British civil service was rescued from the discredit which had previously attached to it, by being recruited by competitive examination. And as the men who won their way into the public offices by these means were among the ablest products of the universities, often far more brilliant than their contemporaries and class-mates who entered upon the traditional political career as members of the Houses of Lords and Commons, it was inevitable that they should magnify their offices, and that their restless energy, at a time when in any case the functions of government were steadily increasing, should enlarge the sphere of bureaucratic activity. We shall have occasion to discuss this development later. In the meantime, the significant fact was that it was unperceived,

even by the acutest of observers. What conccaled it was the fiction (itself an outcome of the doctrine of ' concentration of responsibility ') which made the political head of each department solely responsible for everything that was done by his office, however impossible it might be for him to be aware of all its multifarious activities. Under the shelter of ministerial responsibility the power of bureaucracy was growing apace. But its growth had not yet become great enough to force itself upon the attention of students of British government, and, blinded by the theory of ministerial responsibility, not only Mill and Bagehot, but all their generation, and all the next, disregarded this process. For this reason they paid no attention to what are obviously among the greatest problems of any system of national self-government : the problem of securing that the right men are appointed to the vitally important positions which must be held by trained administrators ; and the problcm of establishing a right relationship between them and the representative government whose servants they are, or ought to be—a relationship such as will ensure that their capacities are fully employed, but employed for ends which the nation wills, rather than for ends which they themselves determine.

The second omission from these treatises was still more remarkable. It was the omission of any discussion of what was, and is, perhaps the most important guiding-wheel of the whole machine of government—the two-party system, whereby not only the House of Commons, but the whole nation, was in effect divided between two political parties, each eternally engaged in the endeavour either to maintain itself in office, or to drive its rival out of office. No analysis of the British system, especially during this period of its highest prestige and efficiency,

which leaves this vital factor in it out of sight can be regarded as in any way adequate.

The division of a whole nation into only two political parties must obviously be more or less unreal or arbitrary, since it would be absurd to suggest that there could ever be only two schools of thought in a nation. Yet, arbitrary as it appears, this division has been extraordinarily persistent in Britain, and the continued dominance of the two historic parties was one of the most marked features of the period with which we are concerned. Whenever smaller groups were formed by scission from the two great parties, they always tended to be merged again, in a very short time. The Peelites broke away from the Tories, but they could not maintaín their independent existence ; they soon became Whigs, and modified the Whig creed by the infusion of their characteristic ideas. The Radicals prided themselves upon their distinct programme, and were often troublesome to their leaders ; but they could generally be counted upon to vote straight in moments of crisis, in order to keep the Tories out of power. When new political groups were formed during this period, they were always groups within a party, not separately organised bodies. The main reasons for this remarkable feature of British political life were two. In the first place, the electoral system, which divided the country into single-member constituencies, was hostile to the growth of numerous parties : if the system of proportional representation which Mill favoured had been introduced, this obstacle to the multiplication of parties would have disappeared. But the second reason was more fundamental. In the British system the main business of the House of Commons was to make and unmake governments, and to control

and check their activities. As politicians could only hope to maintain a government with whose principles they agreed, or to displace a government of whose principles they disapproved, by helping to make a stable majority for that purpose in the House of Commons, it was obviously necessary that they should subordinate their differences on minor matters in order to attain success in their principal aim. It was the responsibility for creating and destroying governments which more than anything else kept the House of Commons, and therefore the country, divided into two main parties.

One of the dangers of this system was that national interests might be subordinated to party needs. This danger also applies to a multiple-party system; and since men must always combine for common action in politics, the choice is not between party and no-party, but between two parties and many parties. It may indeed be said that the more highly organised a party is, and the more ancient and deep-rooted the loyalty of its members, the greater is the danger that party interests may obscure national needs; and that therefore the system of multiple parties, easily formed and easily dissolved, may be a safeguard against this danger. Yet, on the other hand, it is probably true that the leaders of a great party, identified in the eyes of the nation with a long and honourable tradition, are less likely to go seriously astray than the leaders of an evanescent group, formed for the occasion of the moment. The risk that private or sectional interests may be given greater weight than national interests is indeed not peculiar to party government; it exists in all forms of government, and the only safeguard against it is a high standard of public rectitude. That depends upon causes too deep to be

affected by any system of political machinery. Yet it may fairly be said that the two-party system is a real safeguard against a decline in the standard of public rectitude, just because each party knows that its opponents are eternally on the outlook for means of discrediting it, and are certain to pillory and exaggerate any departure from accepted standards of which it may be guilty.

More serious is the danger that a two-party system may have the effect of unduly narrowing and stereotyping the political thought of the country, and that it may exclude from political life men of independent views who cannot bring themselves to pronounce all the shibboleths of either side. That is a real danger. But in the period with which we are concerned it did not seriously present itself. The bonds of party discipline were not yet very tightly drawn, and except on questions affecting the rise and fall of ministries, members of Parliament habitually exercised a far greater latitude of judgment than has since become usual. It is not easy to think of any leading Englishman of the period who might not have found a place happily enough within the hospitable limits of one or other of the great parties. Even O'Connell could regard himself as a Whig, though his darling object, the repeal of the Irish Act of Union, was anathema to the Whigs.

If the system had dangers, therefore, they could not yet be called very marked defects. And it certainly possessed manifest virtues, which contributed in a striking way to maintain the political health of the nation, and to keep alive the political interests of its citizens.

It ensured, in the first place, stability and coherence in the government—qualities which, as we have seen in studying the French system, it is not easy to combine

with the control of a large and shifting public assembly. The ministry in power knew that it could count upon a steady majority so long as it did not alienate or outrage its followers; it could count also upon a large degree of trust, such as is often necessary in great political affairs.

It ensured, in the second place, the maintenance of an incessant and watchful criticism of all the actions of government by the party out of power—a criticism which would be diffused by the Press throughout the country, and taken seriously by the numerous supporters of the Opposition. At the same time it secured that this criticism should be responsible criticism, since the critics were always conscious that they might at any moment be called upon to assume the responsibilities of office, and to make good their assertions. The criticisms of loosely organised groups are apt to be irresponsible, and even if they be never so sound, they are not assured of public hearing. Thus the Opposition, under the two-party system, was called upon to perform a very weighty and important function; it was 'Her Majesty's Opposition' —a phrase which could only have been invented in Britain. It had to perform the duty which a barrister performs in the courts of law, of ensuring that both sides of a question are properly presented before the jury of public opinion; and in doing this it helped to educate and guide the political thinking of the nation.

The value of the 'watch-dog' function of the rival parties in a two-party system may be illustrated by the history of one of the most useful political reforms of the period. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, posts 'under government,' that is, positions in the civil service, were given solely by favour, and almost invariably on

party grounds; the distribution of patronage, even on the humblest scale, was one of the recognised means of strengthening party influence which each party expected to be able to use when it came into power. The practice never went so far, it is true, as it did in America; though men were appointed on the ground of their politics, they were never dismissed wholesale when the rival party took office. But the system was manifestly an evil one, and, in particular, it involved that the public offices contained many incompetents, and that their work was often inefficiently done. In 1858 appointments began to be made by competitive examinations, with such good results that the new method was rapidly extended, and the efficiency of the public service was greatly increased. But the point which concerns us is, that once the new system was established, its existence was made secure by the working of the two-party system. For the party in power dared not risk the damaging attacks to which it would certainly be exposed at the hands of the Opposition if it should depart from the new method, or show unwillingness to extend it. The watch-dog function of Her Majesty's Opposition thus ensured purity of administration. Had there been many parties, the temptation to use patronage for the purchase of the support of this party or that would have been very great; and the groups themselves, individually too weak to aim at power, and therefore apt to be irresponsible, would have been tempted to hope that they might strengthen themselves by being given the disposal of patronage, and would therefore have been likely to be silent. Unquestionably the two-party system was a safeguard against certain kinds of political corruption.

Nor does this end the catalogue of its merits. The

system simplified and clarified the issues of national politics, no doubt in a rather arbitrary way, yet with the result that they were closely and intelligently followed by the public. It focussed attention upon what is after all the main question—the character, conduct, and aims of government; and it made the public discussion of these themes appear to be worth while, because the popular will could and did ultimately determine the main issues. It caused the Press to fill its columns with discussions of great questions of national concern, and with reports of the proceedings of Parliament, which the ordinary man followed with interest just because they were simplified by the party conflict. It turned the full glare of publicity upon the responsible directors of national policy, made the life of public service seem to be (what, on any lofty view, it ought to be) the noblest and most fascinating of careers, tempted young men of ability to aspire after it, and turned the great party leaders on both sides into national heroes. Their leadership, under the stable conditions of British politics, lasted long enough to make them familiar figures, whose personalities and ideas were known and canvassed from one end of the country to the other. They became the embodiments of the causes and ideas for which they strove, and this association of ideas with great personalities made them far more interesting and intelligible to ordinary men, who do not anywhere move freely in the realm of ideas. Palmerston and Derby in the early years of the period, Gladstone and Disraeli in its later years, held the attention of the nation as few of their successors in Britain, and few of their contemporaries in Europe, were able to do. Bismarck, indeed, exercised an even more commanding ascendancy over the mind of Germany. But he stood

alone. He could not, like the British leaders, represent an endless conflict of rival principles, vital enough to command the loyalty of masses of men.

There is no doubt that the working of the two-party system, and the fascination which its conflicts exercised upon men's minds, contributed very powerfully to ease the transition into democracy. For the newly enfranchised classes followed the fascinating duel with an interest equal to that of the middle class. They too could and did joyfully enrol themselves under the banners of the rival heroes, and fight for the triumph of their party. They could feel the delight of sharing in the greatest of all games, as humble members of a vast team under the captaincy of demigods ; the prize of victory being no less than the control of the fortunes of a great nation, and the chance of realising their principles for its welfare. Instead of being tempted to concentrate all their attention upon their class interests, and to use their power for these ends alone, they were led to participate in the discussion of questions affecting all classes equally, of questions affecting the wide dominions of the British Empire, and the fortunes of civilisation. And one of the rules of this noble game was the fine rule that both sides must play fair, must assume that their opponents are honest, and must accept the result of the fight frankly, and not take to smashing the windows of the pavilion in the disappointment of defeat. Is there something unworthy in this comparison of politics to a great game ? Not necessarily : the spirit of sportsmanship, of comradeship in a common cause, of loyalty to the rules, is a very healthy and sane spirit to introduce into political life. There is a real kinship between the sportsmanship which is one of the outstanding qualities of the Briton, and the

political capacity which is another of his qualities. And it cannot be denied that the two-party system appealed very strongly indeed to the sporting instinct, and enlisted it in the service of politics.

The political system of Britain, then, with the two-party system as one of its vital elements, showed itself capable of digesting a vast new addition to the body of its 'active citizens' without losing its character, or making any sudden breach with its traditions. Yet the great change of 1867 produced an immediate and perceptible effect. The process of national reconstruction which the industrial revolution had necessitated, had flagged in a marked way between 1846 and 1867; the mere presence in the electoral body of the new elements stimulated a new advance. One of the early results of 1867 was the full legal recognition of trade unions, which had done such invaluable work during the previous generation, by an Act of 1871. Another result was the introduction of universal compulsory education by the Acts of 1870 and 1875. Before 1870 not much more than half of the children of Britain received even an elementary education, though the great majority of the newly enfranchised classes were literate. But since Britain was to be a democracy, her citizens *must* be educated: otherwise one of the fundamental conditions of self-government would be unfulfilled. This involved the assumption of a vast new responsibility by the State, which had hitherto been content to leave educational work to private enterprise, only assisting and subsidising it. But it is instructive to note—and it is very characteristic of British methods—that even when the State had assumed responsibility, it did not attempt to enforce any rigid uniformity of method throughout the country,

such as the bureaucracies of France and Germany enforced. It has never been possible for a British educational officer to boast, as French administrators are said to have boasted, 'at this hour every boy of ten in the country is reading such and such a book.' The old voluntary agencies which had created the existing schools were left to work much as before; and the business of co-ordinating their work, and of establishing new public schools to fill gaps, was entrusted to new elected local bodies, the creation of which extended the sphere of local self-government. They were all brought under central supervision; but the motive-power was in the self-governing bodies, only a supervisory or regulating authority in the central bureaucracy. Hence not only was self-government strengthened, but variety of method was in some degree encouraged.

In truth, throughout this period, both before and after 1867, one of the features of British life was the increasing multiplication of local bodies for all kinds of purposes—Boards of Health, Burial Boards, Road Boards, Boards of Guardians, School Boards. Their multiplicity formed one of the most impressive contrasts between self-governing Britain and the bureaucratic lands of Europe, where all this administrative work was, for the most part, highly centralised. At the same time, the older local authorities, and especially the Municipal Councils of the towns, were steadily enlarging their powers, and assuming a multitude of new functions. There was no uniformity or system in all this development. Each Town Council, when it found the need for new powers, applied to Parliament for a private Act. And all this pullulating activity was submitted to scarcely any supervision or control by the national government. It was the spontaneous activity

of a self-governing people, other aspects of which were to be found in the innumerable voluntary organisations for religious, charitable, political, commercial, and industrial purposes which daily sprang into being. The result was a strange confusion and conflict of jurisdictions. There came to be so many and various public authorities that the ordinary citizen, their subject and their master, lost track of them and interest in their proceedings. Even the areas which they administered seldom coincided. One publicist complained, towards the end of the period, that he had to pay rates to no less than fourteen public authorities, no two of which dealt with the same area. Some co-ordination and concentration was obviously necessary. The process was begun by the institution of the Local Government Board in 1871. But it is profoundly characteristic of Britain, and an evidence of the strength of the self-governing spirit by which the whole community was permeated, that the organisation of the British society for common purposes proceeded thus, not from the top downwards, but from the bottom upwards.

One last feature of British political life in this period remains to be noted. It was the sign of a coming change ; it was also a product of the growing national habit of political discussion. During this period, but especially after 1867, the importance of the platform and the public meeting grew by leaps and bounds. Instead of confining themselves almost wholly, as had been the custom of the past, to the debates in Parliament, leading statesmen began to make a regular practice of appealing to the public directly—not merely to their constituents, but to the whole mass of the electorate. The leaders of this change were John Bright (who had served his apprenticeship during the Anti-Corn Law agitation) and Gladstone.

It was a valuable means of forwarding the political education of the people, because the speeches composed for these purposes necessarily dealt with broad issues and leading principles, rather than with the practical details and the party manœuvres appropriate to the House of Commons. At the same time, it foreshadowed a diminution in the importance of Parliament, which ceased to be the sole arena of important political discussion.

Manifestly the Britain of 1878 was a genuinely self-governing state. Manifestly, also, the practice of self-government on these lines made for the intellectual and moral development of the nation, as well as for its material welfare. But the notion, implicit in Bagehot's book, and in a less degree in Mill's, that finality had been almost or altogether attained, was a false notion. Under the appearance of fixity, great changes were preparing ; and the spirit of self-government was working for its yet more abundant fulfilment.

VIII

RIVAL SYSTEMS IN OPERATION, 1878-1900

The age of nationalist victories, and of rapid constitutional changes in the chief civilised states, was succeeded by a generation during which (with one conspicuous exception) no fundamental change was made in the system of government of any of the leading states, so that the world seemed to have attained a condition of stability. Enlargements of the franchise, such as took place in Britain in 1884 or in Holland in 1887, did not involve any fundamental change. The one case in which a large reconstruction was undertaken during this period was the case of Japan. Having resolved, after the revolution of 1868, to adopt the methods of Western civilisation, Japan had been at first content to leave the control of her affairs, during the rapid adoption of the material devices of the West, to the absolute power of the Mikado. But in 1878 the first step towards self-government was taken by the institution of a measure of local autonomy, through the institution of elected councils in each of the forty-five 'departments' of the country. In 1882 the laws were codified, and Western judicial methods introduced. And in 1889 the new system was crowned by the establishment of a Parliament of two Houses after the European model, a House of Lords and a Chamber of Deputies, the latter elected on a moderate franchise. But the ministry was not made dependent upon this

Parliament. The immense prestige of the Mikado, whose dynasty was beyond comparison the most ancient ruling house in the world, together with the novelty of the institutions of self-government, made it natural that the Crown should retain the power of appointing ministers. Thus Japan followed rather the German than the British type.

But although the changes in the political systems of this period were, in the European world, few and comparatively unimportant, the period was nevertheless of the highest significance in the history of national self-government, because it afforded opportunities for testing the working and efficiency of the new methods, and for comparing the results of their various types. And this test was all the more instructive because of the novelty and difficulty of the conditions under which they had to work. For it was a period, in the first place, of extreme precariousness and delicacy in the relations between the principal states, and, in the second place, of extraordinarily rapid development and change in the conditions of industry. And both of these things tried the temper of the new governmental systems, and searched out their weak points.

Although no European wars of any importance were fought during this generation, it was a period of intense and growing nervousness of war. The peace which the world enjoyed was an 'armed peace,' during which all the great States were engaged in heaping up armaments against one another, and training an ever-increasing number of their citizens for war. The responsibility for this state of things rests, beyond any shadow of doubt, upon Germany. Her startling victories, gained in wars which she had deliberately provoked, had shown all other States that

their very existence might depend upon their immediate readiness for war. Though Germany was beyond comparison the first military State in Europe, she had fortified herself by the formation of a standing alliance (the Triple Alliance, 1879 and 1882) which enabled her absolutely to dominate Europe. Every other State was forced to realise that Germany held in her hands the issues of peace and war. They were all (especially France) for ever conscious of their insecurity ; and it was inevitable that a rival league should be formed as a protection against this overwhelming dominance of a power which had proved that it did not hesitate to provoke war when it seemed likely to be profitable. Not content with the remarkable ascendancy which she possessed, Germany continued, at intervals of a few years, to increase the numbers of her soldiers, and the elaborate perfection of her material of war ; and other States were driven to follow the same path. The hideousness of this state of things was widely felt, and led to the attempt, at the Hague Conference of 1899, to put an end to the competition of armaments by agreement. The attempt was ruined by the flat refusal of Germany even to consider such a proposal.

In several ways this appalling waste of wealth and manhood profoundly affected the working of the new systems of national government. In the first place, the mere financial burden of it strained the resources of all States, and to a large extent deprived them of the means of adequately reorganising their social systems. For that reason it also encouraged the dissatisfaction of the mass of men with the existing social order. The Marxian school, trained to regard ' capital ' as the root of all evil, attributed this state of things to its malign influence ;

hence the movement of social democracy and the 'class war,' inspired by Marx's doctrines, which had achieved little during the period of nationalist victories because the national cause had everywhere been able to appeal to men's loyalty, was fostered and strengthened. On the other hand, revolution of a violent kind began to appear impossible, just because the military power which governments could wield was so overwhelming. And as the international co-operation of the working classes, who seemed to suffer most from it, appeared to many to be the only practicable way of shaking off this nightmare, the Marxian-Socialist movement once again became an international movement. From 1889 onwards there were regular international conferences of Socialists. They were far more numerously attended than their predecessors of 1864-73.

Again, the high importance attached during these years to military organisation, and to the complex details of foreign policy upon which so much might hang, provided an extremely hard test for parliamentary institutions. They are at their weakest in dealing with these subjects, because the citizens of a democracy cannot have an adequate knowledge of the obscure intrigues in remote places upon which, in such a state of international relations, the issues of peace and war must often depend ; while a democracy is also little capable of understanding the complex problems of the military art. In such a state of things autocracy has every advantage, if it is well served. And it is no mere coincidence that the country which was primarily responsible for this state of things was Germany, a country wherein, as we have seen, under the veil of parliamentary institutions, a military and bureaucratic autocracy really controlled

national policy. In dealing with the kind of problems thus forced upon the world, parliamentary government was apt to show itself at its worst. If it adopted the methods of open discussion which its spirit seemed to demand, it invited confusion and left itself disarmed and helpless before its secretive, competent, unresting rival, which needed to make no compromises and no confessions. If it adopted the secrecy demanded by the ever-present danger of war, and by the kind of diplomacy which this state of things necessitated, it naturally aroused the suspicion and distrust of its subjects. Parliamentary government, so recently established in most of the European countries, could not have been submitted to a more difficult test than that afforded by the problems of the armed peace and the German dominance. It is not surprising that there should be perceptible, throughout the period, a growing sense of dissatisfaction with its working.

While all the great European States were thus watching and suspecting one another, forming rival leagues, and heaping up the materials of destruction, the development of applied science was transforming the conditions of industry with unheard-of rapidity, and the ingenious methods of modern finance, whereby all the innumerable rivulets of private thrift were canalised and brought under the control of a handful of organisers in each country, were rendering possible enterprises upon a scale never before known, were unifying and centralising the direction of the principal industries, and were increasing the complexity of the relations among the leading States, and also between these States and the rest of the world. 'High Finance' was becoming a greater power in States, and in the relations of States, than ever before; the gulf

between the masters of industry and the mass of men who were its servants seemed to be growing greater. This development presented very complex and difficult problems to the rulers of all States. The suspicion began to grow, in the self-governing countries, that representative bodies were unduly dominated by the influence of these forces. Even the most sincere of democrats were baffled by the difficulty of controlling their action without undermining national prosperity. Here again the task was easiest for an autocratic government which had a clearly defined aim of national domination before it ; for such a government could strike an alliance with the controllers of finance and industry, and use them as implements for its purposes, while democracy, aiming not at Power so much as at Justice, could find no such simple solution. But whether in the autocratic state or in the democratic state, these developments tended to increase the appeal of the Marxian doctrine of class-war to the mass of men who vaguely felt themselves exploited. Marx's theory that capital would be so concentrated in course of time that it could be readily conquered and subjugated seemed to be justified by facts, and became more plausible than ever. Hence the astounding industrial development of the period helped to undermine the confidence of many men in government by discussion and agreement, and led them rather to look to a pitiless war of classes for improvement. Large sections of the working class became distrustful of the *bona fides* of their representatives, and began to lose patience with the slow proceedings of deliberative assemblies. On the other hand, the organisers and directors of the new developments, inclined in any case to be distrustful of democracy, were tempted to envy in some respects the position of

their rivals in countries otherwise governed. This tendency was not as yet, indeed, fully displayed during the period under review ; but it was at work already, though it was to become more manifest in the next period.

Finally, this portentous generation saw an extraordinarily rapid extension of the dominion of Europe over the non-European world. It was *par excellence* the period of Imperialism in all the European countries, and even in America. The subjugation of the non-European world by European civilisation which was finally achieved during these years was in itself not an evil, but a good thing [1] ; Europe had much to give to the outer world, and in giving it was bringing about the world's unification. But the great process took place in an unhappy way. It seemed to be, and in many respects it was, too much motived by the desire for mere exploitation, and too much controlled by financial interests. And it was carried out by means of a fierce rivalry among the European States, under the influence of the mutual fears and suspicions born of the state into which Europe had fallen. These facts led many men to distrust and dislike the whole movement, and to visit it, in all its aspects, with an undiscriminating and unscientific condemnation, which supplied fresh fuel for the movement of revolt against the whole existing order. Already, before the period closed, the unrest which was to grow to considerable dimensions in the next period, was very clearly showing itself. And this, too, added to the difficulties of the representative system. There has seldom in the course of history been a complex of problems more bewildering, more likely to create deep antipathies, and less easy of

[1] See *The Expansion of Europe*, chap. vii., for a survey and analysis of these events.

solution by the processes of discussion, than those which this period presented to the governments of civilised States. The parliamentary system was indeed being put to a severe test. In all the more highly developed countries the main problems were of much the same kind. In all countries definite Socialist organisations, more or less clearly adopting the principles of Karl Marx, were being brought into existence, to be bitterly suppressed in some cases, but given free opportunities in others. In all countries the supreme government found itself compelled, in spite of the increasing burden of warlike preparation and the distraction of foreign problems, to undertake larger and larger functions. It will be our task to consider with what degree of success the difficulties of the period were met in various countries, and whether the British and French form of government, in which the executive was under popular control, achieved as good results as the German form, in which the executive was free from control.

The most outstanding feature of the period was the great and growing prestige of the German system, which seemed to be largely responsible for the amazing progress of German industry and commerce, as well as for the impressive political ascendancy which Germany enjoyed in Europe. While other countries were torn asunder by controversy, and pursued a wavering and uncertain policy, Germany, however great her internal differences might be, seemed to be able to follow clear, fixed, and definite aims. Although her new imperial system, with the dominance of Prussia upon which it rested, had seemed by no means secure at the moment of its foundation, and had been regarded with some resentment both by some of the lesser German states, and by many of the

most vigorous schools of political thought, before the end of the period its ascendancy over the nation was unquestioned, and Germans had begun to boast that they possessed the most perfect and efficient system of government that had ever existed in the world. It cannot be denied that the system unified and consolidated the nation in a remarkable degree, contributed very greatly to its amazing economic development, and assured to it an unchallenged leadership in European politics, and the respect (not unmingled with dread) of all other nations. These were great achievements. The only question is, was the price paid for them too high ? That question can only be answered by some analysis of the methods by which these remarkable results were attained.

In the first place, the Prussian-German State was resolute to deny freedom to any forces which did not accept full subordination to the State, or which proclaimed ideals inconsistent with its principles. First among such forces ranked the Christian Churches ; for the ideals of Christianity are not naturally in harmony with the ideals of Prussianism, and through many centuries the Christian Churches have fought against the impious doctrine that Might is Right. Just because of this natural antipathy between Christianity and the Prussian creed, many modern Germans have followed Nietzsche in the repudiation of Christian morality, and have even foretold the rise of a new German national religion,[1] a revival of the old worship of Odin and Thor,

[1] On a Sunday afternoon in July 1914 the writer was profoundly impressed by a sort of religious service which he heard in the great *Völkerschlachtdenkmal* at Leipzig. In a dim circular hall which is carved out of the heart of that gigantic, ugly and lowering column of masonry, he found a silent standing throng, all gazing upwards into the high dome, past the cruel, impassive, colossal faces into which the

which should give its reverence to Might rather than to the anaemic virtues of Justice and Love, which the 'pale Galilean' preached. But Germany remains, at any rate conventionally, a Christian country; and it was necessary for the supremacy of the Prussian system that the official exponents of Christianity should be reduced to submission, and turned from critics into prophets of the Doctrine of Power.

With the Lutheran Church there was no difficulty. Since the time of Luther himself it has always been more submissive to the secular power than any other Church. It is a State Church in a higher degree than any other. The Emperor is its supreme bishop, and he takes his function seriously. Its pastors are largely paid by the State, not, like the Anglican clergy, out of independent endowments; they are controlled by a department of State, and are, in theory and practice alike, State officials. But the Roman Church, which commands the allegiance of almost half of the German nation, especially in the south and west, was apt to be more independent. In attempting to subjugate it Bismarck was drawn into a fierce conflict, known as the *Kulturkampf*, which lasted from 1873 to 1878. His aim, as defined by an eminent German historian, was 'to increase the influence of the State over the Catholic Church, and to put an end to all encroachments by the Church in the political and social sphere'; and for that purpose a severe persecuting code was enacted during the years 1873-75. He did not win a complete victory; in 1878, in order to free his hands for

heavy stone buttresses are carved. Then there came floating down, from an invisible choir far above, thrilling chorales, pæans in the praise of *Deutschland*. It was strange, moving, and horrible; and the listener felt that he was assisting at a festival of a new and grim religion, from which pity was banished.

another struggle, he accepted a compromise, withdrew his penal code, and made an informal political alliance with the Papacy. But in effect, as events have shown, he had won. The German Catholics accepted the imperial system, with its doctrine of State omnipotence. The clergy of the Roman Church, like the Lutheran, are in great part paid by the State; and the government has a power of veto in the election of its bishops. There has always been a powerful Catholic party in the Reichstag, and it has often held the balance; but it has never challenged the State-system or the moral ideas upon which it rests. We have seen during the Great War how profound has been the real victory of Bismarck's spirit. The Centre (Catholic) party, and the Catholic ecclesiastics of Germany, have accepted and justified, as readily as the Lutherans, all the abhorrent acts of the German State, and all its repudiations of moral restraints; they have even defended the murder of priests and nuns in Belgium, and found no word of support for the noble courage of Cardinal Mercier.

The *Kulturkampf* was followed by an equally resolute struggle against Socialism. The Socialists had closed their ranks at the Gotha conference in 1875, and in 1877 they had twelve representatives in the Reichstag. Bismarck saw in the emergence of this consolidated party a menace to that autocratic and class ascendancy and that ideal of domination which formed the essence of the Prussian system. He had no objection at all to State Socialism in itself, as he was soon to show; State Socialism, administered by the existing ruling elements, could only serve to increase their power and their hold over the life of the nation, and was therefore entirely in accord with the Prussian system. But the claim of the

Marxians that the socialised State should be controlled by the proletariate challenged the power of the monarchy and its servants, and against this claim Bismarck declared war to the knife. It was the democratic side, not the socialist side, of Social Democracy which he feared. In 1878 he got the Reichstag to pass a series of persecuting laws against the Socialists, whereby their newspapers were forbidden to appear, their meetings were prohibited, and their organisations suppressed. Renewed from time to time until 1890, these restrictions practically destroyed the overt Socialist movement for the time being. But it was only driven underground, and its resentment was intensified. In 1890 the restrictions were withdrawn by the new Emperor, William II., and this departure from his accepted policy formed the chief cause of the breach between Bismarck and the Emperor. Henceforth the Socialists were free to elect representatives to the Reichstag; their numbers grew rapidly, and in the election of 1898 they obtained over two million votes and fifty-six seats. But they were, of course, powerless to affect the policy of government, since the Reichstag possesses no control over ministers; they could only talk, not act, however large their numbers. They were still regarded as the declared enemies of the State, as the Emperor very frankly told his soldiers, when he warned them that it might become their duty to fire upon their brothers and fathers who were Socialists. Socialist newspapers were allowed to appear, but were proscribed in reading-rooms under public control, and in army barracks; while no government servant, however humble, could become a Socialist without risking his livelihood. In effect, however, the admission of the Socialists to political life largely tamed them; they

accepted in practice the existing system, though they repudiated it in theory ; like the rest of the nation, they had to submit to the subtle influences of the schools and the barracks ; and we have seen, during the course of the Great War, how effective this taming process has been. In truth, without knowing it, the German Socialists became useful agents of the German government. As they were numerically stronger than the Socialists of other countries, and had a certain prestige as the countrymen of Marx, they exercised a great influence in the International Socialist Congresses. Excluded themselves from all possibility of sharing in the government of Germany, they erected this exclusion into a principle, and preached to their fellows in other countries the necessity of abstaining from any direct participation in national government, and of maintaining an unresting opposition, until the vague and distant day when the social revolution should be consummated. They therefore discouraged many Socialists in other countries from playing the part which they might have played in the political life of their own nations, and helped to keep alive that undiscriminating hostility to any and all governments which, in genuinely democratic States, must have none but evil effects. Powerless at home, and becoming progressively tamer, the German Social Democrats actually served the cause of their autocratic and militarist government by using all their influence to undermine the national unity of all Germany's rivals and intended victims. More openly and more consciously they have played the same game during the war.

Another element hostile to the system of the German State, an element which dared to have independent ideals of its own, was to be found in the protesting fragments

of non-German nationalities which had been forcibly included in the German Empire: the Danes of Sleswig, the Poles of Posen, and, above all, the French of Alsace and Lorraine. Towards them the policy of the German government has always been one of ruthless intolerance. They must become German in thought and spirit, or forfeit the rights of equal citizenship. Against them Bismarck and all his successors have pursued a policy which has sometimes varied in its methods, but never in its spirit: a policy not of spasmodic terrorism like that of Russia in Poland or of Turkey in Armenia, but of unresting, hard, efficient, grinding persecution. The German State is tolerant of differences of opinion and ideals so long as they do not undermine the supremacy of the State, or challenge the aims which the State has set before itself; beyond that point tolerance stops.

It was in the sphere of social organisation that the hard efficiency of German government most fully displayed itself. Here the aim was what it had always been in the Prussian State since the time of Frederick the Great. Everything must be done to make the community prosperous and strong, and to remove preventible ills which told against national efficiency. But the ultimate end of these labours must be strength for war—for the war of commerce as well as for the war of arms—with a view to the establishment of German supremacy over other nations. The State must be organised as a vast army, healthy, well found, united in sentiment, equipped in all respects for conflict. But the spirit which was to inspire this army must not be the product of a free fermentation of thought among its soldiers; that would be subversive of discipline. It must be inspired from above. The use to be made of this mighty organised force

must not be determined by itself, but by its masters. It is for the headquarters staff of an army first of all to organise it, and, secondly, to determine how it shall be employed. And the headquarters staff of Germany consisted of the Hohenzollern monarchy with those classes and interests upon whose loyalty it could depend.

The most remarkable aspect of Bismarck's legislation during the 'eighties was his scheme of State insurance against invalidity, old age, and unemployment, which was far in advance of anything yet attempted in any other State. Its aim was not merely to spike the guns of the Socialists by demonstrating to the working class that the State was its best friend. It was also motived by the belief that such provision made for national well-being and efficiency. But perhaps its main purpose was to teach the mass of Germans to trust to the State rather than to their own action. All spontaneous efforts after amelioration among the workpeople, such as the co-operative societies after the British pattern, which were now beginning to thrive, or the trade union organisations, were uniformly frowned upon and discouraged, just because they tended to weaken dependence upon the State, and to encourage independence and initiative among the masses of the people, among the privates of the national army. The German system does not believe in self-help.

In the task of organising the national economy, of husbanding and developing the material resources of the community, Germany showed herself far ahead of all other nations. Indeed we may fairly say that no State has ever taken a more enlarged or a more enlightened view of its functions in this respect. In pursuing this end Bismarck and his successors carried State Socialism to a higher pitch

than any other State. They nationalised the railways, and administered them with a view primarily to the needs of war, secondarily to the needs of trade, and only in the third place to the earning of profits. They systematically developed the forests of the country under State control, and scientific administration. They gave the most assiduous attention to the natural waterways in which their country is so rich, and supplemented them with a great system of admirably devised and admirably managed canals. They encouraged to the utmost extent the development of scientific agriculture, with a view to making the nation self-supporting even when it became industrialised ; and in doing so they held always in mind the needs of war. At the same time they took in hand the organisation of the nation's commerce and industry ; gave subsidies to shipping lines ; encouraged the organisation of the country's banking system in such a way as to facilitate in the highest degree the rapid expansion of trade by making credit easily available ; fostered the centralisation of the chief industries by the creation of Kartels or working agreements for the avoidance of waste by competition ; and spared no pains to assist industrial enterprise not only by the lavish endowment of scientific research, but by helping to cover the world with a network of German commercial agencies. All this, indeed, was in the Prussian tradition : Prussian governments have acted so since the days of Frederick William in the early eighteenth century. They have regarded the whole country as in the last resort the estate of the monarchy, and they have always been careful to make it yield as much as possible, in order that it might be able to stand the strain of maintaining great armies, and form a solid basis for the extension of power ; and no rights of

private property have been allowed to stand in the way of this policy.

Now one result of these brilliantly conducted activities was that the capitalist and industrial classes, once the staunchest supporters of liberal institutions after the British pattern, were won over to an ardent support of the policy of government. Bismarck, indeed, throughout made a point of allying himself with the National Liberal party, which drew its strength from these classes, even running the risk of alienating the Conservative Junkers ; and the National Liberals have ever since been a government party ; they are among the staunchest supporters of the present war. In adopting this policy, Bismarck knew well what he was doing. He saw the importance of industrial wealth to a State which aimed at supremacy in the modern world. He perhaps foresaw —certainly his successors foresaw—that future wars would be waged in the factory even more than in the field. And he perhaps perceived, as his successors have certainly perceived, that the warfare of commerce, if pursued with the methods and in the spirit of the General Staff, by systematic and co-ordinated activity, could be used as a means of undermining and weakening the nation's rivals, and preparing the way for national ascendancy. Therefore, he took pains to knit the industrial classes to the Hohenzollern State by placing at their disposal all the strength of the State. And from this alliance and this guidance German industry learned to pursue the aim of not merely making wealth, but making war, and preparing the way for the culminating onset of armies and fleets. The characteristically German arts of peaceful penetration had already attained a high degree of efficiency before this period closed. Already

they had turned commerce from being (what it had seemed in the rosy vision of Cobden and his school) a maker of peace, into being one of the most formidable weapons of war.

The ability and method with which the organisation of the nation's resources, and the co-ordination of its trading activities, were carried out under the direction of the State had the effect of increasing the hold of government, through the bureaucracy, upon all the material aspects of national life, and of winning for it at once gratitude and support. But more than this was necessary. The mind of the nation, and not merely its material activities, must be tamed and brought under the control of government: the nation must be taught to 'think to order,' and to accept unquestioningly whatever moral and political ideas its masters might choose to impose upon it. Public opinion must not be left to shape itself freely under the influence of all the various currents of modern thought; in the political field, at least, it must be turned (as modern Germans have boasted that it has been turned) into 'an orchestra which answers only to the baton of government.' The achievement of this end has been the greatest and most terrible of the victories of Prussianism; nor has anything more directly contributed to the strength and discipline of this conquering State.

The victory had been already half-won by the immense and resounding triumphs which the Prussian spirit had achieved in 1866 and 1870. Already, under the influence of these triumphs, the most distinguished historians and philosophers of Germany had begun to glorify the methods of Prussianism, to find in the historic principles of the Hohenzollern house the essentials of sound political thinking, and to become the advocates of a

doctrine of *Realpolitik* more unblushingly materialist and cynical than any propounded to the world since the days of Machiavelli. In the vitally important realms of history and political science the German universities, which had once been the centres of liberal thought, increasingly became the pulpits of the doctrine of Power, the doctrine that force, rather than justice, is what holds the State together, and that the increase of brute power, rather than the enlargement of justice, should be its aim. It was not necessary, therefore, to conquer the universities; they became voluntary captives. But it was easy to accentuate their submissiveness, because the universities were all State institutions, and all their teachers were appointed and promoted by the State. The greatest glory of the German universities in the past had been their *Lehrfreiheit*, the absolute freedom of their teachers to teach whatever seemed to them true. In form this freedom was not impaired. In fact, every teacher in a Prussian university (more especially the professor of history, politics, or economics) knew that his chances of advancement depended upon the coincidence of *his* conception of truth with the official doctrine; and the man of independent opinions, the man who declined to make himself a mouthpiece for the glorification of the Hohenzollern dynasty and the ideas for which it stood, usually found that he was left to pine in the obscure and ill-remunerated ranks of the *privat-dozenten*. A single instance may suffice to illustrate the extent to which government control has sometimes been carried. In 1902 the Professor of Jurisprudence at Breslau was lecturing on the law of succession to the throne. He did not dare to discuss the absurd theory of Divine Right, to which the Hohenzollerns still cling; he merely said

that he would pass it over, as being a non-legal subject. But before long he received a warning and a rebuke from the Minister of Education, in which he was told that while he was, of course, free to teach whatever he liked, he must 'reckon with the possibility of his services being no longer required.' That is, no doubt, an extreme case; the Prussian government is not so stupid as often to repeat such manifest blunders. But with such a spirit in power, controlling all the avenues of academic promotion and distinction, it is manifest that university teachers of subjects which have any bearing upon political thought must feel themselves debarred from even thinking freely. The whole influence of the universities is therefore harnessed to the chariot of government, and used for impregnating the national mind with the conceptions which the government approves. Now in all countries the universities must exercise a profound influence upon national thought, since they train the teachers of the schools, the lawyers, the publicists and writers on political subjects. In Germany the prestige and ascendancy of universities has long been greater than in any other country: the Germans are the most docile and the most bookish of peoples, and there exists among them scarcely anything of that healthy, half-humorous contempt for professors which is to be found in other countries. In controlling the universities, therefore, the German government controlled the most powerful influence upon the nation's mind.

Over the lower grades of education the influence of the Prussian government was yet more marked. The whole system was brought under a far more direct and centralised State control than has ever been the case in Britain. Like everything else under the direction of the Prussian bureau-

cracy, the work was very efficiently done. The system was scientifically planned, so as to give to every class just the kind and degree of learning which it needed in order that it might play its allotted part in the life of the nation. It was thus far from being, in any real sense, a democratic system; because its aim was not so much to develop all individual capacity so that it might be employed on whatever work suited it best, as to train classes as such, and so to emphasise the distinctions between them. The results were certainly remarkable, and contributed immensely to the nation's progress. To the boys of the middle class, especially, the system succeeded in imparting an astonishing volume of organised knowledge; and the German boy of eighteen is a mere paragon in comparison with his British compeer. It may fairly be said that his individuality was apt to be lost beneath these masses of imposed knowledge. But there is no denying that he was, and is, far more adequately equipped with the kind of knowledge which will enable him to play his part efficiently as an obedient instrument in the great organised army of a conquering nation. But the most striking aspect of the German school-system was the use which was made of it to impregnate the national mind with a set of political ideas and preconceptions favourable to the Prussian theory of government. The curriculum, more especially in history (to which far more attention was devoted than in British schools) has been systematically used to glorify the Hohenzollern dynasty, to justify its methods, to preach the inherent superiority of the Teutonic race over all others, and the divine destiny of Germany to become the leader of the world. In the schools, even more directly than in the universities, the teachers were made to feel that their prospects depended largely upon their success in creating

among their pupils the attitude of mind which the Prussian government desired. None but the most resolutely independent minds can resist the influence of such pressure, steadily exercised during the moulding years of youth.

To these influences must be added that wielded by the military system, under whose control the whole manhood of the nation came, directly or indirectly, between the ages of twenty and forty. The habit of discipline, of subordination and submission to the officer-caste, and of accepting the idea of utter devotion to the monarch to whom every soldier must swear personal allegiance, completed and enforced the docility of mind already trained in the schools. The whole German military system is based upon the ideas of autocracy and caste supremacy ; unlike the French system, which is democratic in its character. It is not easy to imagine any mode in which submission to the existing order, and the universal acceptance of the ideals by which it was guided, could be more potently assured than the German system of military service. And its political value formed one of the reasons why throughout the period the German government persisted in periodically increasing the number of men under arms in proportion to the increase of population, despite the fact that Germany needed no accession of military strength to secure her from attack. The rule was that not less than one *per cent.* of the population must always be in military training ; and the reason for this rule was quite as much political as military.

Over literature and the newspaper press government naturally could not exercise so direct a control as it could wield over the schools and the army. But imaginative literature always echoes and reflects the mind of the people which creates it, and if that mind is materialised and en-

slaved, literature will become sterile. The imaginative literature of Germany since the middle of the nineteenth century has been very abundant, but it has been singularly lacking in originality and inspiration. None of the great writers who have influenced the thought of Europe have come from Germany during the last half-century. And this is because their work has no universal appeal, since it has reflected the vulgar materialism, the national self-complacency, and the worship of mere brute power, which have dominated the German mind since the great military triumphs of Bismarck, and which have been fostered and strengthened by the whole State-system, and by the philosophy which it embodies. As for the newspaper press, the German government was acute enough to recognise that direct censorship of the rigid kind practised during the early nineteenth century was no longer tolerable or practicable, except in time of war. Bismarck, indeed, did not hesitate to suppress newspapers from time to time, and prosecutions for *lèse-majesté* have been abundant. But on the whole a wide latitude in the expression of opinion has been allowed; the great safeguard being that the nation had been trained not to listen seriously to opinions which the government held to be dangerous. Besides, variety of opinion could do no harm so long as it was kept within strait limits. An orchestra which plays in strict unison produces no very powerful effect. Better that the various instruments should play different and characteristic notes, so long as the main theme could be kept predominant, and the clashing notes kept in harmony by the baton of the conductor. Bismarck invented, and his successors have very efficiently developed, a far more subtle and skilful method of influencing public opinion than that of direct control. It has consisted in the lavish

expenditure of State funds upon the management of the press at home and abroad ; and the supply, under government supervision, of a cheap and full service of news, in which the facts are dexterously handled, by emphasis or suppression, so as to create the kind of impression desired. It is not necessary to falsify the facts ; it is enough to edit them, to select and arrange them. And without endeavouring to dictate the ordinary policy of a newspaper, a government which gives thought to such matters can generally secure the insertion of articles or of persistent little paragraphs expressing a particular point of view, or can by an appeal to patriotism secure the suppression of inconvenient facts, or the support of a particular policy ; the obstinate newspaper can always be punished by the withholding of government advertisements or other such means. These were the methods by which the German government learnt to mould the opinion of the nation, already rendered docile by the instruction of the schools and the discipline of the army. This is what Bismarck called ' the mobilisation of public opinion,' and regarded as a process almost as important for victory as the mobilisation of armies. It constitutes an interference with freedom of thought and the free movement of opinion far more dangerous than the most rigid censorship. But it was very efficient ; and it brought the result that, according to an important German publicist, ' there is no public opinion in Germany : public opinion is an orchestra which answers only to the baton of government.'

Such was the working of the German system, a system of military and bureaucratic autocracy, veiled by representative institutions, using these institutions as a means of feeling the pulse of national opinion, employing every device to organise and bring under government direction

all the material resources of the nation, and to guide and direct the movement of public thought; but wielding all the power thus won for the purpose of realising aims which the nation had no share in defining. It was the most scientific and efficient system which the world had ever seen. It made the nation prosperous, united, and terribly strong, and turned it into a formidable engine of war, the wielders of which might well feel that world-supremacy was within their reach. But, as events have terribly demonstrated, it poisoned the nation's very soul. And what shall it profit a nation if it gain the whole world, and lose its own soul?

In startling contrast with the demonstration of the German system which these years afforded was the demonstration afforded in Russia of the working of a different kind of autocratic government; an autocracy unveiled by even the semblance of a representative system, served by a bureaucracy which was not even efficient, and having as its aim not the subtle indoctrination of a whole people's mind with its own ideas, but the mere prohibition of all independent criticism or discussion of national policy. This was autocracy in its most sterile and destructive form, which actually encourages inefficiency and backwardness because the efficient and the progressive are tempted to think for themselves. The one healthy feature in the political life of Russia during this period was to be found in the work of the Zemstva or County Councils, and the Municipal Councils of the towns, which had been instituted in the 'sixties. They were carrying on useful labours of education, sanitation, and local government, in which their members were acquiring a real political capacity. But the numbers of those who had a share in such work, and in the political

training which it gave, were very limited; they were regarded with deep distrust by the governing bureaucracy, which lost no opportunity of checking their work, or whittling away their modest powers. When the bureaucratic system broke down and showed its shameful incompetence and corruption in dealing with famines during the 'nineties, the Zemstva alone saved the situation, and made it clear that Russia was by no means lacking in men of public spirit and administrative capacity. But this demonstration only increased the jealousy and hostility of the ruling bureaucracy. Instead of developing and making the most of these promising beginnings, the ruling elements in Russia continued to discourage and repress them. The period was, in short, one of mere stupid reactionism. It reaped its natural fruit in the fostering of secret conspiracy and aimless violence, which reached its height with the murder of the Tsar Alexander II. in 1881; and the excesses of Nihilism provided further excuses for violent repression, conducted with a disregard of every principle of justice. Under such a system opposition is certain to be driven to extremes, to adopt visionary ideas, and to become destructive rather than constructive. The best brains of the nation, excluded from participation in useful public activities, deprived of all political experience, and driven back upon themselves, gave ready harbourage to the most fantastic projects. No great nation could remain for long content with a system so perverse, so corrupt, so inefficient and so radically unjust as that by which Russia was governed. She was drifting towards revolution; and it seemed to be the deliberate plan of her governing class that the revolution, when it came, should be robbed of sane and rational leadership.

What added to the danger was that during this period Russia began, for the first time, to be seriously affected by the industrial revolution. The rapid growth, in some of her large towns, of an industrial proletariate, brought with it new problems, with which her corrupt and incompetent government was quite incapable of dealing. This new element, drawn from among the illiterate peasantry, and for the most part quite ignorant and totally unversed in political problems, understood nothing but its own wretchedness, and formed a ready prey for the crudest doctrines of revolutionary Socialism.

Autocracy in Germany could claim that it made for national strength and prosperity. Autocracy in Russia could not even put forward that claim. Yet when we compare the ultimate effects of the two forms of autocracy upon the peoples who were subject to them, and upon the fortunes of civilisation, it may be doubted whether the deeper reprobation must fall to the Russian system. It was shamelessly unjust. Yet its injustice was of a kind which aroused indignation and sympathy with its victims, and therefore stimulated rather than deadened the desire for justice among its subjects. The German system administered with meticulous exactitude a well-devised system of law, which was just to those who accepted its political ideas, but ruthless to those who repudiated them ; its very efficiency helped to lull to sleep the consciences of its subjects in all those matters which did not affect their personal or national interests, stifled the spirit of justice among them, and prepared them to applaud the most hideous disregard of right that history records. The Russian system endeavoured to forbid all expression of opinion upon political subjects, and all free political action ; and it consequently drove into extrava-

gance and unreality much of the political opposition which it aroused. But it did not, and it could not, repress the free movement of the Russian mind, which expressed itself in a literature of imaginative insight, idealism, and spiritual sincerity which gave a fresh inspiration to human thinking. The German system did not suppress the surface manifestations of political thought or political action; it went to their roots, it impregnated them with its own spirit, and it won for the ugliest ideas of political and moral materialism an absolute and desolating ascendancy over most of the guiding minds of the nation, with the result that the influence of German thought upon the civilised world has for a generation been either null or poisonous in the moral and political spheres. The very stupidity and inefficiency of the Russian system, while it brought many woes, saved the nation from the worst result of subjection, the enslaving of its mind to a false and destructive ideal. The very efficiency and purposefulness of the German system was undoing the German nation, by blinding it to the fundamental distinction between right and wrong: the ruin was none the less real because it came dressed out in an alluring vesture of worldly success. 'All these things and more also,' wealth, trade, military success, perhaps world dominion, 'will I give unto thee if thou fall down and worship me'; and the German nation was so trained that it fell down and worshipped, instead of crying, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'

From the two great autocracies of Europe we may next turn to examine the working during this period of the two greatest European democracies, those of France and Britain. Both were, as democracies, of recent establishment. Both, but especially that of France, were very

severely tested by the strain of the period, by its imperial adventures, its burden of armaments, its growing social unrest. In neither country did the parliamentary system arouse among its subjects such whole-hearted and unqualified approbation as the German system evoked in large elements of the German nation. In France the system was indeed only slowly establishing itself. It was the object of unceasing criticism even from its supporters, and of bitter opposition from more than one side. In Britain the self-complacency of the previous age, which we have seen echoed by Mill and Bagehot, was rapidly diminishing. In the judgment of many well-qualified observers, the system was beginning to break down, and the increasing dominance and rigidity of party divisions aroused a growing discontent. Yet there were but few citizens of either country who would have consented to exchange their method of government, with all its defects, for the German system, which was so strikingly demonstrating its practical efficiency; while, on the other hand, there was in Germany an increasing proportion of the population, represented by the Radical and Socialist parties, who were anxious to cut at the roots of the German system by adopting the central feature of the British and French system, and bringing under the control of the representative body the unchecked authority of the Crown and its administrative bureaucracy. This contrast is highly instructive and suggestive. It indicates in advance the conclusion to which a more detailed analysis will bring us: the conclusion that while democracy could not compare with autocracy in the definiteness and the simplicity of the national aim which it set before itself, and therefore in the efficiency with which it pursued its aim, there was

something in the spirit of the democratic system which outweighed all the practical deficiencies of its early development, and which caused it to appeal to the idealism of its citizens in a way that could never be equalled by the deadly efficiency of autocracy pursuing the purely material end of mere ascendancy.

In France the period may be defined as one of constant struggle for the system of parliamentary Republicanism. The Monarchist parties, who had been in the majority in the Assembly of 1871, had, as we have seen, only consented to the establishment of the Republican system because they could not agree among themselves. They had postponed its formal enactment as long as they could (1875). Even after it had come into being, though henceforward outnumbered, they long remained numerous, and restless in their opposition. They retained hope of a victory so long as the Royalist Macmahon retained the presidential chair; even after his resignation, in 1879, they continued active. Perhaps the moment of final Republican victory may be fixed in 1883, when it was adopted as a principle of the constitution that 'The Republican form of government cannot be made the subject of a proposal for revision.' The effect of this was that while the Chamber or the Senate might, under the constitution, propose constitutional changes, they were henceforth forbidden to propose the introduction of monarchical institutions. That could not now be put forward in a constitutional manner, but only by a violent revolution. Yet even now the agitation against the Republican and parliamentary system did not cease. It formed the strength of the Boulangist movement (1887-89). Boulanger was an empty and pretentious general, who won some popularity by his good looks and by his

insistence upon the need of concentrating all the strength of France upon the obtaining of revenge from Germany. He demanded a revision of the constitution, and a return to something like the system of Napoleon III. for the sake of military efficiency. But he was in reality only the puppet of the forces of reaction, and his fall in 1889 was a great victory for Republicanism. Again, there is some reason for supposing that the same forces were at work in the miserable Dreyfus affair (1897-1900), wherein the professional jealousies of army chiefs, resentful of popular control, were strengthened by anti-Semitic feeling in denying justice to a cruelly maltreated Jewish officer. The combination of the best elements in the Republic, in 1899, to clear up this mess, and to stamp out the intrigues and secret influences which were at work in the direction of the army, was another and definitive victory for the parliamentary and Republican cause.

In the Dreyfus affair, in the Boulangist struggle, and in all the reactionary movements of the time, the strength of the party of reaction was mainly drawn from the Church. Hence the struggle for the security of the Republican system largely resolved itself into a conflict with the Church ; and this conflict filled the period with which we are concerned, and lasted on into the next period. *Le cléricalisme, voilà l'ennemi,* said Gambetta, the most vigorous of the Republican leaders during the early part of the period ; and this became the accepted doctrine of strict Republicans. It was mainly over the control of education that the conflict raged, since it was the influence which the Church could exercise through the schools upon the mind of young France which formed its greatest strength. And as educational work was mainly carried on by religious ' congregations ' or orders, such as that

of the Jesuits, it was against these orders that the attack of the Republicans was primarily directed. The wise Pope Leo XIII. did his best to ease the strain : in 1885 he issued an Encyclical calling upon Catholics to recognise French political institutions ; and in 1892 he followed this up by a definite command to the French Catholics to abandon all attempts at political domination, and to rally to democracy, 'since the civil power, upon every theory, comes from God.' But this wise guidance was ill-obeyed, and had only a temporary effect. Before very long French churchmen were lending themselves to an ugly campaign against Jews, Protestants, and infidels ; the movement, encouraged by a spurious patriotism which called itself 'Nationalism,' was supported by the army chiefs. The conviction of Dreyfus was one of the outcomes of this movement ; and it was what lay behind it which gave the Dreyfus case its profound political significance, and turned it into a crisis in the history of the Republic : a struggle between Republicanism and its enemies, and also between liberty and intolerance.

The prolonged conflict with the Church was in many ways a very unhappy thing for France. The hostility to clericalism was easily represented as, and sometimes developed into, a hostility to religion. It therefore encouraged some of the unhappiest tendencies of French life. It alienated from the government and excluded from effective participation in politics some of the most valuable elements in the community. It contributed to the disorganisation of the parliamentary system, helped to make ministries weak and fluctuating, and distracted their attention unduly from many urgent and difficult problems. Yet the struggle was inevitable, though it sometimes assumed unpleasant and needlessly acrimonious forms.

Nor was it only from the side of the reactionaries and their ecclesiastical supporters that the system of the parliamentary Republic and the ideal of democratic co-operation in government were threatened. These years saw the birth and early development of the political Socialist movement in France, which, as a serious factor in politics, may be said to date from 1882. From the first the French Socialists split into numerous sections. Some, influenced by the revolutionary tradition, advocated mere violence, unceasing war against the existing order, and abstention from all dealings with the parliamentary system : they would have nothing to do with democracy until democracy had adopted their ideas, and until the kingdom of heaven had been taken by violence and the social revolution accomplished. Others, who came to be known as the *Possibilistes*, adopted the more rational line of trying to use Parliament for the gradual embodiment of their ideas. They became, in effect, the extreme left wing of Radicalism. But even these declined to pledge their support to any government, or to allow their members to accept any office of responsibility. Hence the Socialists in Parliament, and still more the non-parliamentary Socialists, formed an element of standing hostility to the existing order ; and the violences of the anarchist groups, who were generally regarded as the extreme wing of Socialism, such as the murder of President Carnot in 1894, widened the gulf. The Socialists, however, though (as in other countries) they claimed to be the sole spokesmen of the people, commanded but a small proportion of the votes cast by universal suffrage. And as the period went on, their impracticability diminished. They steadily supported the Republican cause against the Boulangists, the Clericals, and the Militarists. And when, in 1899, the

Waldeck-Rousseau Cabinet was formed, by a coalition of all the Republican groups, to guide the State through the Dreyfus crisis, one leading Socialist, M. Millerand, accepted office. He was the first Socialist member of the government of any European State. His acceptance of office split the French Socialist party. It aroused a storm of controversy in the International, where the Germans, themselves hopelessly excluded from any share of political power, loudly proclaimed the poisonous sourness of all governmental grapes. But it marked the beginning of a great change, which was to make it possible for leading Socialists, like Briand and Viviani, to play a great part in the political life of the nation during the next era. Thus, by 1900, not only had the reactionary enemies of parliamentary government been definitely routed, but the obstinate refusal of extreme democrats to take part in the effective direction of national affairs had begun to break down.

The greatest difficulty of a democratic system is the difficulty of obtaining loyal co-operation in the working of the system among groups of widely diverse points of view, and to persuade these groups to abstain from the methods of mere wrecking, while leaving them full freedom of thought, speech, and action. France's long tradition of revolutionary upheavals and *coups d'état*, and the multitude of divergent schools of thought which her history had produced, made this difficulty greater in her case than in the case of any other state. The success with which she attained this end during the long and difficult controversies of this period was a real triumph for democracy. The constantly recurrent crises of these years make, on the surface, a poor comparison with the firm order and methodical progress of the German system. But when we

are tempted to draw such a contrast, let us remember that France was striving to attain, and was largely attaining, a much more difficult and a much more valuable thing than that at which the German system aimed. She was trying, not, like Russia, to suppress the divergent movements which naturally and healthily arise in a great nation, and not, like Germany, to tame them or emasculate them, but to bring them into the habit of discussion and co-operation for the common good. Voluntary co-operation is a much finer thing than enforced obedience ; but it is much more difficult to ensure. In the incessant controversies of this period France was slowly learning this lesson. And if she sacrificed something of efficiency, something of her strength and of her immediate and external unity, in the struggle, the sacrifice was worth while.

Unhappily, the acrimonious controversies of this period, and the numerous factions into which the political world was divided, concealed in some degree the real progress that was being made, and weakened men's confidence in parliamentary institutions. Ministries were short-lived and embarrassed. The constantly changing procession of politicians who passed into and out of high office bewildered the onlooker : there were very few dominant personalities who could appeal to the public imagination as the representatives of great principles. The business of bargaining and intrigue which necessarily accompanied every change of ministry under a multiple-party system seemed sordid and insincere. The notion grew that politicians as a class were corrupt self-seekers. It was encouraged and fomented by the acid criticisms of those elements in the State which had declared hostility to the existing order, the reactionaries on the one hand, the more extreme Socialists on the other. And it was not without

some justification ; for in a system of shifting cliques and groups corruption finds an easy access. There was a succession of rather unsavoury political scandals. Thus, in 1887, President Grévy was compelled to resign because some of his entourage were guilty of dealing corruptly with the Legion of Honour ; the Panama scandals, when a number of deputies were found to have been bribed by the Panama Company, aroused a still deeper distrust ; and there were other unpleasant episodes of a similar character. In the eyes of solid, industrious France, unhabituated to the discussions and controversies of representative government, politics as pursued in Paris were apt to seem a rather shady mystery. That is not the spirit which creates full confidence in government.

Yet, although it must be recognised that there was some foundation for the uneasiness about the working of the parliamentary system which marked the period, there was no real ground for pessimism. This harassed and troubled system of government succeeded in carrying out a remarkable amount of good work. It revived and encouraged French agriculture, giving great attention to its scientific problems, encouraging co-operation among the peasantry, and providing them with working capital for the development of their industry. Not even Germany surpassed the activity of Republican France in the study and development of agricultural science. Though handicapped by the lack of coal, it did much for the development of industry. It made new railways, great roads, and a magnificent system of canals, superior even to that of Germany. Above all, it brought into being an admirable system of national education, modelled largely on that of Germany, but in many essential respects superior to it. The French democracy was to be an educated

democracy. And once that was secured, as it was by a long series of enactments during the 'eighties and 'nineties, the ultimate health and vigour of French society was ensured, provided that the very existence of the State could be safeguarded against the dread peril which, as every Frenchman knew, for ever threatened it on the eastern border. Thus, although the system of the parliamentary Republic inspired no such unqualified satisfaction in any quarter as the German autocracy inspired in large sections of the German people, it was making for unity, peace, and orderly development, and rendering possible the free co-operation of all the diverse elements of a great people, under the influence of a free movement of thought. Under its ægis France was regaining much of that intellectual and spiritual leadership of Europe which she had for a time lost under the deadening influence of the Napoleonic régime ; while Germany had sacrificed the 'kingdom of the air' to seize the material dominion of the earth, and her spirit, once the spirit of freedom and truth, was being stifled and poisoned by the malaria of materialist doctrine. When the grim twentieth century opened, which was to put all beliefs and all nations to a dreadful test, France had not indeed fully overcome her internal difficulties, or solved her domestic problems. But she was in the way to solve them ; they no longer threatened her with mere anarchy. Only from without was the growth of ordered freedom menaced by the ever-looming spectre of a brutal war of destruction.

In Britain the period showed little external change, but the beginnings of a profound change in spirit. On the one hand there was an advance in the democratisation of the machinery of government. But this was not followed, at once, by any very direct participation of

the mass of the people in the conduct of affairs. On the contrary, there was a great revival of the power and influence of the old ruling elements in the State, the causes of which are deserving of analysis : the dominant Liberalism of the preceding period gave place to the equally dominant Conservatism and Imperialism of the years 1878-1900. The period saw a great extension of the sphere of government, and of its interferences in the daily life of the people, and a consequence of this was a rapid, but as yet almost unperceived, growth of the power of bureaucracy. At the same time the ineffable complacency with the parliamentary system which had been expressed by Mill and Bagehot began to give place to a vague dissatisfaction, the source of which may be perhaps mainly traced to the growing rigidity of party organisation, and to the growing sense, fostered by the endless and time-devouring controversies over Ireland which filled the period, that parliamentary discussion was largely a futile waste of time. It was becoming apparent that a good deal of recasting would be necessary in the British system. And although the recently enfranchised democracy was as yet for the most part quiescent, there were signs that it was waking up, that it was tempted to use its supreme power, and that some elements in it were beginning to be influenced by the ideas and methods of Marxian Social Democracy as it was working on the continent of Europe.

In two ways the democratisation of the machinery of government was carried further in Britain during these years. The Reform Act of 1884 enfranchised the agricultural labourer, and went near to (though it did not attain) the establishment of manhood suffrage. Incomplete as it was, and many as were the anomalies still left

in the British franchise, this Act may be said to represent the first step in the British advance towards complete democracy which was dictated by pure theory, and not by practical considerations. For there was no effective demand for the agricultural franchise ; still more noteworthy, the enfranchised of 1884, unlike their predecessors of 1867, had not demonstrated their capacity for self-government by spontaneous co-operative activities on their own account. Lacking political experience, they were apt to go like sheep to the poll, and to use the vote without very clearly understanding what it meant. The introduction of this new mass of voters was, beyond doubt, part of the reason for the Conservative reaction which began at the next election, and lasted till 1906.

More immediately important than the Parliamentary Reform Act was the reconstruction of local government which was achieved during the period. In 1888, the establishment of County Councils for the first time provided the rural districts with elected representative bodies, and the political authority of the Justices of the Peace, drawn from among the landed gentry, practically came to an end. The new bodies were, indeed, naturally and healthily, dominated by the same class. But they now held their power by election, not by prescription. At the same time, the vast metropolitan area of London was, for the first time, endowed with a single controlling body, elected by popular vote. It showed in its first years so much of the enthusiasm of the new broom, and so great a readiness to embark upon the paths of municipal socialism, as perturbed its Conservative creators. But it is characteristic of British political development that an era superficially characterised by political reaction should have produced so valuable an enlargement of local self-

government. Finally, in 1894 the machinery of representative local government was further expanded by the establishment of District and Parish Councils. This was an attempt to revivify the once vigorous co-operative activities of the rural districts. It has produced, as yet, very little result, because the social conditions of the rural areas were not such as to encourage any great activity. But the machinery is there, ready to work as soon as the power is created which can drive it forward.

These may be described as the last acts of the purely political reconstruction which had been carried out in Britain during the nineteenth century. It had placed the control of public affairs, central and local, in the hands of democracy, if democracy chose to use it. But as yet democracy seemed indifferent; and throughout these years it was content to leave power in the hands of the landowning class, and of the bulk of the capitalist controllers of industry and commerce, who had now joined forces with them. It was rewarded in two ways: first, by an unparalleled extension of the dominions of the British Empire, especially in Africa, and by the rise of a new spirit of pride in the imperial achievement of the race; secondly, by the beginning of a new policy of social reconstruction with the Employers' Liability Act and the unfulfilled promise of a scheme of Old Age Pensions, modelled on that of Germany. On the whole it was well pleased with these boons, until the South African War, which came as the culmination of the imperialist period, brought about a great revulsion of feeling. But until then the dominance of the Conservatives, and of the ideas for which they stood, seemed unshakable. Nothing proved this more clearly than the renewed strength and courage of the House of Lords, the

one great undemocratic element in the British system, and the stronghold of the old ruling interest of land, and the new ruling interest of industrial capital. In the previous period the House of Lords had been, as a rule, shrinking and timid in its resistance to changes which its members disliked. In 1884-85 the part they had played in hampering the passage of the Reform Act had led to an agitation for the abolition or reconstruction of this aristocratic survival, and it had seemed as if the Liberals were about to proceed to the final democratisation of the parliamentary system. But the tepidness of the public response to this agitation showed that the Conservative reaction was already strong; and in the following years the Lords showed a boldness in action such as they had never exhibited in the preceding period. During the 'transient and embarrassed' Liberal ministry of 1892-95 they actually rejected almost every important legislative proposal sent forward by the majority in the Lower House, and the calmness with which the country received these Acts showed that it was willing to accept a system whereunder, whenever the Liberals had a majority, they should be made impotent, while whenever the Conservatives had a majority they could do what they liked. There was no serious outcry against this system, until in 1907 the House of Lords went so far as to invade the Commons' supreme control over finance. Nothing could more plainly demonstrate that the country had, at this period, no objection to aristocratic leadership, so long as it worked reasonably well.

The root cause of this remarkable reaction, which had its parallels in other countries, was to be found in the bankruptcy of nineteenth-century Liberalism. Its programme of political liberty, the removal of legally estab-

lished privileges of class or sect, and the withdrawal of all restrictions upon economic competition, which had aroused so much enthusiasm in the early part of the century, had now become *vieux jeu*, in part because it had been almost completely carried into effect, and the benefits which it had to give had been, in Britain at any rate, largely reaped ; but in part also because it no longer commanded the old belief. On the economic side especially, Liberalism, in Britain as in other countries, was handicapped by its alliance with the doctrine of *laisser-faire*, the doctrine of self-help, of the ' free field and no favour and devil take the hindmost.' As we have seen, this doctrine had enjoyed a greater ascendancy in Britain than anywhere else. It had secured the allegiance even of the great trade unions, fighting though they were for better economic conditions for their members.

But a change was coming. Just as in other countries the movement of Marxian Socialism, and the theory of the ' class war ' between the *bourgeoisie* (who were everywhere the most active Liberals) and the extruded proletariate, were winning an increasing strength, so in Britain also there began to arise during these years a demand that the power of the State should be used to save the ' hindmost ' from the ' devil.' The Social Democratic Federation, which preached the pure milk of the word of Marxianism, was founded in 1881 ; the rival but kindred Independent Labour Party in 1893. These bodies professed to appeal to the working class ; they never obtained more than a handful of adherents, because the British mind instinctively distrusts such abstract theories as they preached ; but their very existence was the sign of a new spirit. In 1883 the little group of intellectuals who called themselves the Fabian Society began their

vast scheme of permeating existing British parties and institutions with Socialist (though not with Marxian) ideas. But they also had few adherents. More significant was the rise of the New Unionism, which arose out of the London Dock Strike of 1887. It was an attempt to bring into the trade-union movement not only the more prosperous trades of the upper artisan classes, who had hitherto been chiefly affected by it, but the unorganised mass of unskilled labour. And just because the organisation and resources of this class were less able to undertake, with much prospect of success, a long struggle for better conditions such as the greater resources and closer organisation of the engineers and the miners had enabled them to carry on, the new unions were led to look to political action for the securing of their ends, to demand that the power of the State should be exercised in their interest, and to think of using their votes to secure direct representation in Parliament. Even the older and more conservative unions began to be drawn towards the new policy. The moment when they were brought to contemplate direct political action as a class may perhaps be dated from 1890, when the Trade Union Congress demanded the legislative enforcement of an eight hours' day. And in 1900, at the very close of our period, the trade-union organisation joined with the earlier Socialist organisations to form a Labour Representation Committee, whose business was to be the creation of a specific Labour Party in the House of Commons. In all this (apart from the small coteries of the S.D.F. and the I.L.P.) there was indeed little of the doctrinaire Socialism of the Marxian pattern which was represented by the continental Socialist parties. The bulk of the trade unionists who joined in this movement

were not, indeed, Socialists in the continental sense at all. But they had made up their minds that the power of the State must be used, not merely to secure that the old functions of government should be carried on in accordance with the public will, but to obtain a far-reaching social betterment. The great mass of the nation, whether trade unionists or not, remained loyal members of the old traditional parties, Liberals or Conservatives, and hesitated to follow the lead of these more enterprising innovators.

But the significant thing is the emergence of a new spirit ; and because this new spirit was inconsistent with some of the traditional doctrines of Liberalism, Liberalism passed for a time under a cloud. On the other hand, the Conservatives, who had never fully shared the Liberal distrust of any enlargement of State action, were not unready to show some sympathy with the new spirit. Their social reforms, like the Workmen's Compensation Act, did as much to win for them the loyalty of a rapidly changing nation as their apparently triumphant imperial policy. The reaction of these years, therefore, was by no means pure reaction ; it was in a great degree due to the fact that an enlarged conception of the functions of the State, and the ends of political action, was struggling towards its birth. This was in itself a perfectly healthy development ; and it is worth noting that in the British community (apart from a few knots of theorists) it did not assume the form of any declared hostility to the existing system, or any proclamation of war to the knife.

At the same time it is possible to perceive, growing during the period, a vague dissatisfaction with the working of the parliamentary machine. Partly this was due to the fact that a generation which had begun to desire that

political power should be employed to effect social changes no longer found the old satisfaction in the excitement of the political game between the ' ins ' and the ' outs.' But in a higher degree it is to be attributed to changes which were taking place in Parliament itself, and in the political life of the nation.

In the first place, the parliamentary machine showed signs of breaking down. The Irish Home Rule movement entered upon an acute stage at the beginning of the period, and, without reaching any solution, dominated British politics throughout its course. The method adopted by the Irish under Parnell's guidance was that of forming a distinct party, vowed to abstention from office, to permanent opposition, and to the use or abuse of all the forms of procedure as a means of making the Irish problem a permanent nuisance until it should be solved. This meant that the simplicity of the two-party system, on which the smooth working of the parliamentary machine had depended, was for the first time broken. The Irish Nationalists had hitherto been a wing of the Liberal party, loosely attached, indeed, but still falling into the system. It was now wholly independent. More than once it was able to hold the balance between the older parties, and to decide the fate of ministries. If it gave steady support to the Liberal ministry of 1892-95, this was only on condition that Home Rule was steadily kept in the forefront ; and the situation thus created made it appear that the ministry lay at the mercy of a single group, and weakened public confidence in its action. The possibility that a single group might thus be able to impose its will upon the government of the country pointed to a real weakness in the British system. At the same time the methods of parliamentary obstruction systematically

pursued by the Irish party, the disorderly scenes which resulted from it, and the spectacle of members suspended from service or locked up in gaol, immensely diminished the prestige of the House of Commons.

It was also becoming apparent that the volume of work thrust upon the House of Commons was too great to be efficiently performed. Apart from a few great controversial measures, legislation was hurriedly and inadequately discussed; the control over finance seemed to be inefficiently exercised; the supervision of administration appeared to be little more than a sham, because ministries, secure of a standing majority, were nearly always able to swamp criticism under the mass of brute votes. So far as these criticisms were justified—and they were largely justified—they rested upon three facts. In the first place, the dislocation of the parliamentary machine, which we have already described, wasted an infinity of time, and made adequate discussion of many important questions almost impossible. The mechanism of Parliament needed revision. In the second place, the rapid extension of the sphere of government, on which we shall presently have something to say, and the steady increase in the power of the bureaucracy which it brought, rendered necessary a closer, instead of a more spasmodic and distracted, attention to the working of the administrative system.

But the third cause was the most important of all. The rigidity of the party machine was increasing with alarming rapidity. In part this was due to the influence of the Irish, who were organised under an all but military discipline; the other parties, in conflict with them, had to tighten their bonds. But the change would have come about even if the Irish party had never been born. It was due to the establishment of democracy,

and the need of high organisation to deal with the vast masses of votes. Growing steadily since 1867, this elaboration of party machinery reached its culmination in the 'eighties, when first the Liberals and then the Conservatives set up central party organisations, supported by large subscribed funds, and corresponding with local organisations in all the constituencies. The results of this were profound and far-reaching. As the central caucuses often contributed, directly or indirectly, to the cost of contesting local elections, they were able to impose candidates upon the local organisations. And as a candidate had little or no chance of being elected unless he was supported by a party-machine, the caucus was able to stipulate for his absolute loyalty to the party leaders, on the threat of ousting him from his seat if he showed insubordination. Hence the independence of members of Parliament was undermined ; and their responsibility was in a large degree transferred from their constituents to the party organisation. It would not be just to exaggerate this process. Members still showed a good deal of independence ; governments still found it necessary to drive them with a loose rein ; the caucus did not dare too openly to override the opinions of constituencies. But the reins were there, and they were handled by the party leaders. Another result was yet more perturbing. The party funds, which in all parties were secretly administered, had to be kept up. Electioneering on a national scale is a very expensive business. Men who contributed big sums to the party funds expected to be respectfully listened to. They did not always contribute purely from enthusiasm for the cause ; or, at all events this enthusiasm was reinforced by other motives. One of these was the desire for titles and honours, which are dispensed by the head of the party in

power on behalf of the Crown. Without going so far as to say that there was an auction of titles, for this would be untrue, we may reasonably say that the claim to a peerage of the man who contributed £20,000 to the party funds was likely to be favourably considered. Another motive was the desire for a 'safe seat' in Parliament: in constituencies where a party possessed an assured majority, the influence of the caucus could be used to secure the nomination of men who contributed handsomely to the party funds. Finally, there was ground for suspecting that large contributors to the party funds could exercise more than their legitimate influence in determining the policy of the party, and in securing that one question should be pressed, another burked. We need not exaggerate the evils which resulted from this system. The traditions of British public life were too clean and healthy to make it possible that they should be carried to an extreme. But these evils existed. The nation was beginning to be vaguely conscious of them, and uncomfortable about them. And in consequence there was beginning to arise a new current of dissatisfaction with the party system, which was apt to forget that this system alone rendered practical the smooth working of parliamentary government. Yet when all is said, the working of the British system was still in the main healthy and successful. After all, party caucuses exist to further an ideal cause; and even in the midst of the machinery of electioneering they cannot wholly forget this. They exist, also, to win the support of the ordinary electorate, and they cannot win this support if they try by tricks to ensure the victory of a policy in which the electorate disbelieves; they must keep their ears open to the movement of public opinion. Hence even through the increasing rigidity of party organisation, the national

mind, so far as its views were formulated, was able to control in all essentials the direction of the national government.

Yet another factor tending to weaken the influence of parliament was the growing influence of the platform and the Press. We have seen that during the preceding period statesmen had begun by platform pronouncements to go behind parliament and to appeal directly for national support. This practice grew very rapidly during the period with which we are concerned. It became the custom that many of the most important pronouncements of political leaders should be made, not in Parliament, where they could be discussed, but before large meetings of supporters, and, through the Press, to the whole electorate. The leaders on the other side replied in the same way ; and thus the great debate on national policy was transferred in a large degree from Parliament to the platform. This had its valuable side, in forwarding the political education of the people. But it also had its defects ; and one of these was a steady undermining of the influence of Parliament. What made this great change possible was the remarkable expansion of the cheap newspaper press, which was brought about by the diffusion of popular education. Now a newspaper is a costly thing. It requires a very great capital. And the wielders of this capital exercised very great power. Most of the newspapers were identified with one or other of the great political parties, and their proprietors could exercise a considerable influence upon the policy of their party. It inevitably became an object of party tactics to obtain control over this great newspaper or that ; and in this process the party which controlled most wealth was naturally most successful. But the newspaper press,

dependent for its circulation upon the mass of readers, must above all things avoid dulness. Detailed reports of parliamentary proceedings are apt to form dull reading. Hence, while the big public speeches of the leaders obtained full publicity, not only the routine course of public business, but the expressions of opinion of men whose names were not widely known, and whose views did not serve a party cause, were apt to be kept in the background. Here, again, it is necessary to beware of the temptation to exaggerate. The British Press was governed, on the whole, by a fine tradition of fair play, from which only the baser papers were tempted to depart, and in this period the baser papers had not yet achieved the largest circulations. Moreover, if financial power exercised a dangerous influence over the newspaper press, at least there was in Britain no sign as yet of the use of the inexhaustible funds of the nation, or of the power of government, to doctor the expression of public opinion in the manner practised in Germany. And, finally, the British electorate showed itself to be unexpectedly capable of forming an independent judgment, whatever the newspapers might say : time and again it gave its decision in the teeth of an almost unanimous journalistic chorus. But when all is said, the power of the Press formed one of the problems of democracy ; nor have we yet discovered how to ensure that in the formation of that public opinion by which every democratic society must ultimately be guided, every sane and healthy element shall have free play, and the influence of secret forces shall be kept in check. The problem has become the greater now that the unceasing argument about national policy is carried on by newspapers which no longer pay that attention to parliamentary discussion

which once distinguished the British press. Not the least striking result of this development has been its reaction upon the character of parliamentary discussion, which has taken on a certain unreality. Too many members, finding themselves debarred from independent action by the rigidity of party control, and aware that the serious discussion of political issues in the House will not win for them the public attention it would formerly have won, are tempted to speak and act in the way which seems most likely to please the newspapers, and win their notice. And this, in its turn, contributes in the long run to the undermining of the prestige of Parliament.

While the influence of Parliament was, for all these reasons, slowly declining, the power of bureaucracy in the British system was growing very rapidly, though as yet it was almost unperceived. The increasing magnitude and complexity of the functions of government in a modern State made this inevitable. A Foreign Office which had to deal not only with the affairs of high diplomacy among the leading States, but with the acute commercial rivalry of all the nations in all parts of the world; a Colonial Office which was responsible for the administration of vast undeveloped territories newly acquired in Africa and other backward regions; an Admiralty which was responsible for the enormous and complicated mechanism of a modern fleet; a War Office which must concern itself with the defence of an empire scattered over all parts of the world, as well as with the possibilities of European complications: such vast enterprises could no longer be effectively directed by amateurs, or adequately supervised by a Parliament already distracted by a vast mass of multifarious business, and mainly engrossed by party controversies. And if this

was true of the old departments of State, it was still more true of the new departments brought into existence by the ever-growing needs of a highly developed society. The supervision of industry, under the terms of a whole code of Factory Acts ; the development of a system of national education ; the administration of a vast and growing concern like the Post Office ; the encouragement and regulation of the multifarious activities of the local authorities : all these were complex concerns which demanded expert knowledge and direction, such as could only be supplied by an army of highly skilled salaried officials. Quite inevitably these officials wielded an increasing degree of independence. They formed, indeed, the real working force of government. They controlled, in detail, the carrying out of the laws. They mainly suggested new laws ; nine out of ten of which (putting aside the great controversial party measures) passed through Parliament with little discussion, and were suggested by the practical needs of administrative work, and drafted in the big departments. They even fixed the national expenditure, since their influence was decisive in determining how much should be spent in this department or that.

The means of controlling these powerful and valuable public servants which the British system provided were three in number. The chief was the presence, at the head of each department, of a parliamentary politician. But the politician, distracted by the continual demands of public controversy, must be a child in the hands of his permanent officials, unless he was a man of exceptional force. In the nature of things, nine-tenths of the business of his office could never come before him for a personal decision. On the other hand, his unqualified responsibility for every act of his depart-

ment concealed the real responsibility of the officials. And, under the working of the party system, he was nearly always able to check any serious attack. The second means of controlling the bureaucracy was the asking of questions in Parliament. This was, and is, a useful device, which keeps the bureaucracy always on the alert. But it has been used in a very unsystematic and spasmodic way, and the typewritten answers supplied by the bureaucrats to be read out by their parliamentary chiefs are not always of a very frank or illuminating kind. The third means ought to have been more effective. It was afforded by the opportunity for discussing the work of each department which was given by the annual vote for the department. But, in fact, this opportunity has never been used for the purpose of seriously investigating the working of the department. When the Foreign Office vote comes up, a member will move the reduction of the Foreign Secretary's salary by £100 as an excuse for ventilating his opinions on the Balkans or on Persia ; but there is seldom any discussion on the actual working of the office-machine. In truth, the British system, having been more free from bureaucracy than any other, and having grown up in a period when bureaucracy could almost be dispensed with, because the functions of government were so simple that they could be effectively directed by amateurs, has not yet succeeded in bringing bureaucracy under effective criticism or control. That was already perceptible during the period with which we are concerned, though it was largely concealed by the nominal responsibility of the political chiefs of departments. It was one of the problems of democracy for the future. Though we have been slow to recognise it, bureaucracy is an indispensable

element in the government of the modern State. But its inevitable growth must, in a greater or less degree, defeat the ends of self-government unless it is brought under effective control, and kept in its place as the instrument, not the master, of the national will. And although bureaucracy enjoyed, and enjoys, no such unqualified dominion in the British system as falls to it in the German system, yet the methods of public control must be made more efficient than they have hitherto been if the ideal of self-government is to be fully maintained. It does not matter how many people cast votes at parliamentary elections, or how often they cast them, if in the end their representatives are not capable of exercising, or do not exercise, a due control over the machinery of government.

The self-complacency of the previous period regarding the perfection of British institutions was thus disappearing. They were the objects of a growing criticism. They were displaying real, though not yet very serious, defects. This was mainly due to the special strain which the circumstances of the period were imposing upon them. The old machinery had to adapt itself to the demands of an awakening and as yet only half-instructed democracy. That was the main cause of the rigid organisation which political parties were forced to assume in order to deal with a vast untrained electorate ; that was also a large part of the cause of the dangerous powers wielded by the newspaper press. Again, the system was now no longer able to confine itself to the comparatively simple functions of government which were enough for our fathers ; the needs and claims of the age were forcing it, half-unconsciously, to assume great functions of social organisation, of education, of economic direction. And this was

the main cause of the rapid growth of bureaucratic power under the shelter of the old forms. To all this were added the assumption of immensely increased responsibilities of empire in the outer world, and the anxious task of dealing with infinitely more complex and menacing problems of foreign relations. That the system should have been able to adapt itself at all to these trying conditions, and to maintain its health, was evidence of its fundamental soundness, and of the sanity and good sense of its citizens. For its defects were superficial, and capable of remedy. The machinery of the system, though manifestly open to improvement, was such as to ensure that a freely formed public opinion could, once it was definitely formulated, control the direction of national policy. No government, no party, dare directly defy it. No supreme power restricted or tampered with the right of all honest bodies of opinion to exercise what influence they could upon the national mind. No government could survive if it lost the support of the representative body ; and the representative body, though it did not and could not reflect every shade of opinion in the nation, could not resist any definite and strongly held conviction of a majority of the nation. If highly organised parties were able sometimes to cozen the electorate, that was only because the electorate lacked clear views. If bureaucracy was winning great power, the main principles upon which it acted were under the control of Parliament and through it of the nation, and were checked and restrained by the criticism of Parliament, and still more by the vigorous independence of self-governing local bodies and trade organisations, in a degree to which there was no parallel in Germany, or indeed in any other State save America and the British Dominions. What the

dissatisfactions of the period demonstrated was that the British system needed further development and improvement, and perhaps a clearer distribution of the functions of government, in order to meet new conditions ; not that the system itself was bad.

Already, before the opening of the twentieth century, it had become a common fashion to compare the British system unfavourably with the German, at least in regard to its efficiency in performing certain important public functions. And in some respects the comparison indubitably told in favour of the German system. The skill and method with which the material resources of Germany were husbanded and organised for the national advantage presented some features which not Britain only but all other communities might with advantage imitate. The efficiency of the German educational system, on some of its sides, deservedly attracted the encomia of educational reformers in Britain, and its methods were directly imitated, to a large extent, in France, America, and other countries. The success of Germany in these two spheres, indeed, did more than even her military power to win for her the remarkable ascendancy over the mind of the civilised world which she possessed at the close of the nineteenth century. But there was a reverse side to the shield : how black, later events alone have enabled us to see. The efficient organisation of the nation's material resources placed a very dangerous power in the hands of a government that was free from all effective control as to the way in which it should wield them. The influence over the nation's mind which its efficient educational system gave to the government was a yet more dangerous, and ultimately a ruinous, power.

What the lauders of German efficiency, and the critics

of other systems, failed to realise was that this efficiency was itself in a great degree due to the very irresponsibility of the German government. It is the bureaucrats, or professional administrators, who in practice make the working of a system efficient or inefficient; and given that two groups of bureaucrats are equally competent and industrious, the group that is least distracted by criticism will get the most work done. Compare, from this point of view, the lot of the British bureaucrat—in spite of all we have said about his growing power—with the lot of the German bureaucrat. He has to deal with a self-governing people, trained by centuries of habit to an obstinate insistence on their individual rights. He must meet the sometimes captious criticisms of innumerable elective bodies with large independent powers, and of powerful voluntary organisations, which are apt to be very suspicious of him. He is exposed to the unceasing fusillade of questions in Parliament and letters to the newspapers. He must accommodate himself to the point of view of the changing political chiefs who preside over his department. They are amateurs, but usually very intelligent amateurs. They have theories and policies of their own. And they have the last word. The German bureaucrat suffers from no such vexatious restrictions. He has to deal with the most docile of peoples, trained to the obedience of the parade ground. The head of his department is always a bureaucrat like himself. The Reichstag is a much humbler and less inquisitive body than Parliament, and, in any case, cannot interfere; the organs of local government, in so far as they exist, are very much at his mercy. If the British official enjoyed the same independence as the German official, he would, in some ways, do his work better, and he would certainly do it more quickly and

easily. Government would be more efficient ; but it would also be more masterful, and less considerate of public opinion. A certain degree of inefficiency is the almost inevitable product of the practice of self-government, and the control of the State service by elected representatives. It is the price which self-governing nations have to pay to secure that their officials shall be the servants and not the masters of the public, and that the policy which they pursue shall be a policy whose spirit and aims are dictated by the nation.

And there is yet another thing which those who lauded the German system for its efficiency were apt to forget. Before we are justified in commending a man or an institution as efficient, we must ask, Efficient *for what* ? It is easier to be an efficient burglar than an efficient philanthropist ; and if we were to draw a comparison between a burglar and a philanthropist, we should certainly attach far more weight to the ends they had in view than to the skill and success they displayed in pursuing them. In comparing two systems of government the same principle applies ; we must continually ask ourselves what are the ends pursued, consciously or unconsciously, by each ; and we must recognise that efficiency in the pursuit of a mean and low aim, and one that can be clearly defined, is far easier to attain than efficiency in the pursuit of a lofty aim, of an aim that changes and grows as men's hopes and beliefs change and grow.

And here we come to the fundamental contrast between the German and the British, the autocratic and the self-governing, systems. The German system, in accordance with the long-established traditions of Prussia, held before itself a perfectly definite end : the extension of Power, the creation of a Master-State, which should be able ultimately to dominate the world. It conceived it to be its right and

duty to organise all the material resources of the nation, and to mould and control the nation's mind in order to make it a pliant instrument for that supreme purpose, towards which all the strength of the nation must be devoted, and before which all other dreams and aspirations must give way. It defined national well-being ultimately in terms of Power, and of Power alone. And it was ultimately in view of that supreme end, and not primarily for its own sake, that high intellectual development, equally with material prosperity and the strength of armies, was fostered and cherished. But intellect must not presume to claim freedom ; it must not criticise or hamper the masters of the State, or introduce elements of discontent into the disciplined nation-army that was setting forth to achieve the domination of the world. That was a grandiose aim, if a vulgar one ; but it was precise and definite, and its clearness made for efficiency.

The self-governing system aims at something quite different, something which is very elusive and hard to define ; and just because of this lack of definition efficiency in the pursuit of it is difficult to achieve. It aims at the well-being of the whole community, and of every element in it ; but wherein this well-being ultimately consists, and how, amid the constant flux of human affairs, it can best be realised, the self-governing principle cannot exactly say. Certainly it does not find it in mere Power, which men have always pursued, and often attained, but in which they have never found satisfaction, but only fresh labour and trouble. The conception of human well-being, and of the modes of social organisation best suited to realise it, undergoes continual change and continual enlargement under the influence partly of changing conditions of life, partly of growing knowledge, partly of the dreams and ideals of great men which gradually wield their influence

upon the mind of the community. Not even the wisest man can ever be trusted to say just how this vast and vague aim can be secured ; for not even the wisest man is capable of grasping the whole bewildering miracle of Man, his animal desires and his limitless aspirations, his nobility and his pettiness, his easily fired enthusiasms and his obstinate prejudices, his indestructible desire for justice and his insatiable appetite for power. But if we may not trust the wisest, still less may we trust a monarch chosen by the accident of birth, or any single class, whether aristocratic, professional, or proletariat, with its prejudices, its shallow theories, its narrowing traditions. How, then, shall the enlarging sense of the true nature of human well-being, and the true aims of social co-operation, be enabled to work itself out without being petrified and sterilised by the particular dogmas of any class or sect ? The self-governing principle asserts that the most hopeful mode, among any people whose habits of mind and training make this possible, is to give free play to every movement of thought, since all alike contain some element of truth, to let this incessant stream of discussion, from all sides at once, exercise what influence it can upon the popular mind, and to take the resultant body of opinion, with all its defects, as on the whole the safest available guide. Let every kind of influence, every form of leadership, gain what power it honourably can ; let the nation choose its own leaders, and express its will, so far as it can be formulated, through them ; and let this General Will, vague, shifting, and variable as it may be, but guided by all the most healthy forces of knowledge and wisdom to which it is willing to submit, determine the general spirit and direction of national policy, retaining and using the knowledge of experts and the zeal of reformers, but never allowing their professional interest or their one-sided

enthusiasm to obtain an unqualified dominion. The rashness of the theorist will be corrected by the stolid resistance of custom ; the passionate zeal of the enthusiast will be checked by the insistence of established interests upon the respect due to their claims. Such, in very general terms, is the theory of self-government. Its ideal is to put the direction of human affairs, in all societies which are linked by such unity of sentiment that mutual understanding among them is possible, under the control of the Spirit that is for ever moving upon the waters of the human sea. For it believes that this Spirit works for justice, and has wrought for justice unweariedly ever since it guided the first steps of Man out of the mire from which he sprang ; and in that sense the principle of self-government asserts that the voice of the people is the voice of God. But just because this conception is so indefinite, and varies continually in its immediate aims, it is far harder to express in a formula than the clear-cut doctrine of Power. It has no such definite criterion to determine its course of action ; and it cannot hope to achieve the same measure of hard efficiency.

These two opposed theories of government stood in sharp contrast at the opening of the twentieth century. Never in human history, not even in the days when the free States of Greece stood out against the despotism of Persia, have the two principles of self-government and domination appeared in clearer antithesis. For as the spirit of autocracy has never in history obtained a fuller command over the minds, bodies, and resources of a great people, or been more terribly organised for conquest, than in the Germany of 1900 ; so the spirit of self-government has never achieved so complete a mastery as it had in the great States of the West, after the long and toilsome experiments and struggles of centuries.

IX

THE BREWING OF THE STORM, 1900-1914

The burdened and unrestful peace of 1878-1900 was succeeded by a period of wars and alarms of war, of diplomatic crises, of revolutionary upheavals, and, even in some of the most orderly and settled States, of embittered controversy and outbursts of violence. The pace of the current was quickening as it neared the cataract; the dread of what was coming weighed upon all observant minds; the intensity of military preparation increased as this dread grew; and under all this intolerable strain, the growth of orderly self-government, so recently established in many States, and burdened with so many problems of social reorganisation in all, was hampered by greater difficulties than ever.

It is not our business here to deal with the diplomatic and military events of these years. They will be looked back upon by future historians as a period of unrelieved nightmare, though their horror was unrealised by those who lived through them. But without some realisation of the nature of the strain we can scarcely form a just impression of the ordeal to which the institutions of self-government were being subjected, or arrive at a fair judgment of its achievements. When the new period opened, the South African War was raging; it nearly led to European complications, and it did not end till 1902. In 1903 came the Serbian Revolution, with the murder

of the King and Queen; and at the same time intense unrest in Macedonia, the meeting-place of the Balkan peoples, showed that trouble was brewing in these vexed lands. In 1904-5 the Russo-Japanese War led to the confusion of the Russian Revolution, which died down, but had by no means attained a solution, by 1907. In 1905 the first Morocco crisis, deliberately precipitated by Germany, nearly brought war among the Western powers. In the same year the union of Norway and Sweden was broken by a peaceful revolution. In 1908 the Turkish Revolution brought the Balkan question to a crisis. It gave to Austria the pretext for annexing Bosnia, and this brought the danger of a general European war very near in 1909. In that year also a revolution in Greece brought into power the great statesman Venizelos. In 1910 came the war between Italy and Turkey. In 1911 the second Morocco crisis, directly due to Germany, again brought a general war very near. In 1912 and 1913 came the two Balkan wars, which were only a sort of prologue to the final catastrophe of 1914. It would be hard to find, in any other period of equal duration, so continuous a succession of crises and alarms. And meanwhile most of the great States, and many of the small, were disturbed by outbreaks of violence, general strikes, and attempts by minorities to get their way by force. The readiness of discontented elements to resort to force, even in the most democratic countries, was one of the most perturbing features of the period. All these troubles tested the capacity of self-governing institutions, and seemed to many to herald their approaching breakdown.

The main cause of these strains and distresses was to be found in the state of international politics, in the burden and waste of military preparation which deprived

governments of the means of dealing with domestic ills, and in the atmosphere of discontent and suspicion which this state of things engendered. The mass of citizens in the self-governing countries were unable to grasp the bearing of these events upon their own fortunes; they were inclined to blame their governments for whatever was wrong. Their statesmen were too much engrossed by their own immediate problems to give to the whole situation the attention it deserved; if they had tried to deal with it firmly, they would not have been followed by their fellow-citizens; all they could do was to stave off the evil day. But the masters of the great autocratic State to whose deliberate action this ugly state of things was largely due, had no such troubles. Their subjects had been trained to docility. Their policy could be pursued in secret. They saw in all this confusion the means to forward their own clearly defined and steadfastly pursued purpose; and instead of doing anything to allay it, they did their best, at many points and in many ways, to stimulate and exacerbate it.

The minor causes of all this sequence of trouble were too manifold and various to be capable of analysis in a few sentences. In the Balkans, and among the unhappy subject peoples of the Austrian Empire, the spirit of nationality was working like yeast; but what especially stimulated it was the dread of the policy of domination pursued by Germany and her Austro-Hungarian and Turkish tools, and the disturbing influence of their intrigues. In Russia the trouble was the natural harvest of a long period of corrupt and oppressive government. But in Russia and elsewhere the demand for the sudden establishment of complete democracy, among a people quite untrained for political responsibility, raised hopes

too visionary to be realisable, and thus produced confusion and deepened unrest. In all countries the rapid development of scientific industry, and the growing power of massed capital, produced a swift growth of working-class organisations, modelled on the trade unions of Britain; but lacking the long training of the British trade-union leaders, their inspirers were often wildly unpractical and unbalanced. Among these groups the doctrines of Marxianism, often in its crudest and most noxious forms, were spread abroad by the influence of the International Socialist Congresses, and encouraged the notion that a brute war of classes would enable the Kingdom of Heaven to be suddenly taken by storm: internecine war in every State was to take the place of that national co-operation which is the ideal of self-government. The mere spectacle of all the great States armed to the teeth, and lavishing their money and their intellectual resources upon the heaping up of ever more formidable implements of destruction, persuaded unreflecting men that their affairs were in the hands of fools or knaves, and undermined their confidence in their governments; it also strengthened the materialist view (which is the core of Marxianism, as of Prussianism) that in the last resort brute force, not justice, rules the world; and it led men (and women too) to lose patience with the tedious discussions of the self-governing system, and tempted them to resort to violence. And to all this must be added the fever and friction which were the aftermath of the fierce rush for extra-European possessions.

These factors would in any case have made this a very troublous time. But behind and above them all, the chief cause of unrest (though few perceived it) was the growing menace of German ambition. Having brought

its organisation to the highest pitch of efficiency, the formidable autocracy of Germany was in these years, as we can now see, definitely contemplating and preparing for the realisation of that supreme end for which its whole system was devised, the extension of its Power by force. The intolerable competition of armaments, which formed the chief cause of all the strain, was, as we have seen, directly due to Germany. It became far more intense during these years, just because Germany was preparing for the final stroke. To her other preparations she added vast projects of naval construction ; and the culmination of this unresting preparation was the series of Army Acts in 1911, 1912 and 1913, which were the immediate prelude to the Great War. At the same time her spies and secret agents were spread abroad by the thousand in every country of the world ; and while her General Staff was maturing its plans for a sudden onslaught on peace-desiring powers, her Secret Service was equally assiduous in laying plans for influencing the minds of all nations, and for turning to account every element of discontent in other countries. We know now how her agents had entered into underground relations with the most diverse and inconsistent elements, with Sinn Feiners and Ulstermen in Ireland, with Clericals and Socialist extremists in Italy and France, with Ukrainians and Finns, with reactionaries and revolutionaries in Russia or among the exiled Russians in Switzerland, with dissatisfied Boers in South Africa, with seditious groups in India, with the anti-British parties in Egypt. In every country every source of discord was stirred and troubled, so that Germany might gain. The great diplomatic crises of the period were nearly all of her making ; the Morocco crises of 1905 and 1911 were to be used as a means of alienating

France and Britain ; Germany was the hand in the glove of Austria in the Bosnian crisis of 1908-9 ; it was her influence which destroyed any chance that the Young Turk movement might be a source of progress, and turned it into a source of mischief ; her influence ruined the Balkan League, which might have made peace in that unrestful region. Everywhere her busy agents were at work, helping to intensify the confusion out of which she hoped to profit. All these things may seem, on the surface, to have little to do with the growth of self-government. They have everything to do with it. Self-government could not work under such a strain. Its existence was not safe while this condition of things lasted. If the world was to be 'safe for democracy,' it must be made impossible for any power to act in this way. That was the lesson of the period. With all its horrors, the war came as a relief to the believers in self-government. At last the issues were plain. Full national co-operation (though under the artificial conditions which war renders necessary) became possible again. The air was cleared, and it became apparent that whatever the immediate pretext of the war, its mightiest issue was this : that the world must be made safe for self-government.

Nearly all the governments of the world realised the evil of this state of things, though they did not always clearly trace it to its source. They all wished to diminish armaments ; the flat refusal of Germany made that impossible. They were all anxious to increase the safeguards for peace and to remove mutual suspicions. This desire found expression in the conclusion of a multitude of arbitration treaties,[1] and at the Congress of The Hague

[1] This movement is more fully described in *Nationalism and Internationalism*, pp. 182-90.

(1907) the powers tried to make the system effective and universal. Germany, while loudly claiming to be the friend of peace, stood aloof from and scoffed at the movement, and her opposition at The Hague prevented anything effective from being achieved. The warrior-state was not going to tie her own hands ; but she was glad to see her rivals occupying themselves with the mirage of organised peace.

With the pacifist movement of the period as a whole we are not here concerned. But there is one aspect of it which deserves our attention : the part played in it by the Marxian-Socialist groups of all countries in their international congresses ; because this had a direct bearing upon the working of self-government in the individual states. The desire of the Socialists for peace (which was no stronger than that of other men) actually took forms which weakened the power of all the democratic governments, to the advantage of Germany, while it did no sort of harm to Germany herself.

The Marxian doctrine was that war between States was to be brought to an end by the homœopathic remedy of a universal class war, in which the ' proletarians of all lands,' repudiating the outworn shibboleths of patriotism, were to unite against capitalism. A series of International Socialist Congresses, at Stuttgart in 1907, at Copenhagen in 1910, at Basle in 1912, declared that capitalism was the sole cause of militarism, of imperialism, and therefore of war ; and that it was the duty of the workers in all lands, immediately war threatened, to attack their ' capitalist ' governments, and to render them powerless for offence or defence by means of a general strike or otherwise, without asking whether they were the aggressors or not, and without being deflected by patriotic

sentiment, merely on the assumption that all governments, however democratic, were equally 'capitalist,' and equally responsible for the outbreak of any war. This pitiful nonsense was, of course, based upon a total misreading of history : for while capitalism, as a powerful factor in States, is of very modern growth, wars have been waged by aggressive governments throughout the course of history, and they have been less frequent in the capitalist period than ever before. Again it simply disregarded the facts of the existing situation, refusing to inquire who was responsible for beginning the competition of armaments and the formation of threatening alliances, and whether, once it was begun, the other powers had any alternative but to follow, in self-defence. Finally, it drew no distinction at all between governments which were subject to the control of democracy, and governments which were not. The International's recipe for stopping war might have worked, in theory, if the Socialist groups of the International pattern had commanded majorities in every country, and were able and willing to use their power. They were everywhere small minorities, except in Germany. And in Germany they not only had not the power to act ; they had not the will.

The part played by the German Socialists in these Congresses was, indeed, very significant. As the most numerous and highly organised of all the Socialist parties, and as the countrymen of the Apostle Marx, their influence was preponderant ; the International was almost a German organisation. They supported the vague denunciations of capital as the cause of war. They loudly proclaimed beforehand that should war come, all governments would be equally to blame. They encouraged their colleagues

from democratic countries in their project of hampering their governments in every possible way if war should come. But when it came to pledging themselves to any definite action in their own State, the most militarist in Europe, they could never be pinned down to any promise. And their action at home showed that, in fact, their government need fear no opposition from them. Though they regularly voted against the military budget, that was mere ritual, and had no effect. In 1913 they departed from this tradition when they voted for the levy on capital necessary to meet the enormous charges of the Army Act of that year, though no power threatened Germany. And on 4th August 1914 the Socialist members of the Reichstag voted unanimously in favour of the war-credits demanded for the invasion of Belgium. Three days earlier, Herr Müller, one of their number (who was later employed as an agent of the German Foreign Office) had been sent by motor-car to Paris to urge the French Socialists to refuse war-credits to the French government, with the implicit promise that the German Socialists would follow the same course.

We need not assume that in pursuing this policy the German Socialists were consciously acting as the agents of the German government, by endeavouring to stir up disunity in the States which Germany intended to attack; but, unconsciously if not consciously, they were turning the 'International' into one of the most useful of German agencies. It is significant that in Britain and France Socialists of the International school (like the small I.L.P. group in Britain) were always ready to uphold and justify the actions of the German government, while adopting a definitely anti-patriotic line of action. The Utopian pacifism of such men as Jaurès and Sembat was doubtless

inspired by a generous idealism. But in presence of the terrible menace which loomed over the world, it was hopelessly out of touch with facts.

There was none of this Utopianism among the German Socialists. They had studied too well the teachings of Marx, that hater of Utopias. They had imbibed from him a materialism closely akin to that of their own government. He taught them that war was the rule of life ; and if their first interest was, in theory, in the class war, they could accept also the idea of an equally endless conflict between nations, ultimately soluble, perhaps, only by the supremacy of the most 'cultured' and the strongest. 'Peoples who are stationary,' their early prophet Lassalle had proclaimed, 'can rightfully be conquered by peoples who enjoy a more advanced civilisation.' Whatever the International might say, the German Socialists at home proclaimed their patriotism. They demanded more powerful artillery for the army. They disbelieved in disarmament : 'It is absolutely inconceivable,' said their greatest leader, Bebel, 'that the rival military States should come to an agreement regarding disarmament.' In short, German Socialism had been so effectively tamed that, while it was ready to encourage in other countries the pacifist and anti-patriotic campaign of the International, at home it was not anti-patriotic, or anti-imperialist, or even, in the last resort, anti-militarist. The anticipation that German Socialism would prevent the outbreak of war was always an illusion as baseless as the belief that the Kaiser was a bulwark of peace. The sole effect of the pacifist campaign of International Socialism, under German leadership, was to increase the difficulties of the self-governing States, and to hamper them in preparing to ward off the coming peril. It did not in any way

weaken, but rather helped, the designs of the German autocracy, which was forcing catastrophe upon the world.

It would need volumes to describe and analyse all the far-reaching political movements and changes which filled the years preceding the Great War. All of them tended to enlarge the range and power of democratic self-government; some of them displayed, in a perturbing way, its dangers and defects, especially in countries whose citizens lacked training in political responsibility; most of them illustrated the evil effects of the intense international strain of these years. We have only space to touch upon a few aspects of this confused and stirring period which help to throw light upon the problems of self-government. Both in the selection of the topics which we shall dwell upon, and in our treatment of them, we must be hampered by the consciousness that the events are still too near to us, and the passions which they aroused still too intense, to allow us to pretend that we can take a perfectly balanced and impartial view of them. Yet they cannot be passed over without notice. They were too important in themselves, and they gave too clear a demonstration of the dangers to self-government which result from an unhealthy condition of international relations, to be disregarded.

If our study of the growth of self-government in the western world has shown us anything, it is that the fortunes of self-government are bound up with the fortunes of nationalism, since it is only in communities unified by national feeling that genuine self-government is possible. The experience of 1900-14 made this lesson clearer than ever; it emphasised also the fact which we have so often noted, that some degree of education and political experience in the community is necessary for the successful

working of national self-government. But it brought out also, what had earlier never been so clear, that the healthy development of national self-government is equally dependent upon the existence of a stable international order, and upon the possibility of conjuring the constant dread of war. It showed, finally, that since European civilisation had now achieved the domination of the world, a stable international order could no longer be attained by an adjustment among the European nations alone, but must embrace the whole globe. Only by the establishment of a 'world-order' could the world be made 'safe for democracy'; only so could the ideals of national freedom and self-government, which had become parts of the system of western civilisation, be effectively realised. Thus all the great problems which we have attempted to survey in the present volume and in its companions,[1] were knotted together in the tangle which the Great War was to give the world an opportunity of unravelling. This is the point of view which must guide us in our selection of facts for analysis.

The Serbian Revolution of 1903 is instructive as displaying the essential connection of the democratic and the national ideas, and as illustrating in a peculiarly poignant way the reaction of the European system upon the internal development of individual States. Serbia had a very democratic constitution. But it was necessary for the ambitions of Austria and of Germany that she should be kept in a state of dependence. Under the wastrel King Milan and his son Alexander this was achieved by means of court influence; these princes were in effect Austrian agents in their own country. But the Radical, which was also the Nationalist, party was in-

[1] *Nationalism and Internationalism* and *The Expansion of Europe.*

evitably anti-Austrian; because the bulk of the Serbian race were subjects of the Austrian Empire, and cruelly oppressed. The democratic system of Serbia would have given the upper hand to the Radical and Nationalist party. Therefore, in 1893-94, the young king Alexander carried out a *coup d'état*, abolishing by his own fiat the democratic constitution, and reconstituting it to suit his own views; and he followed this with a wholesale proscription of the Radicals. This was the main cause of the ugly palace-revolution of 1903, when the young king and his wife were murdered by a band of officers, and the exiled royal house of Karageorgevitch was restored. It was a horrible episode; the more civilised countries of the West afford few parallels to it since the sixteenth century. But Serbia, after five centuries of Turkish tyranny, was no more advanced than the France of the Guises, or the England of Henry VIII. The real importance of the episode was that the democratic system was restored. And the democratic system brought the hostility of Austria and, behind her, of Germany, whose projects could not tolerate the existence of a free Serbia. A tariff war was followed by the Austrian annexation (in defiance of treaty agreements) of the province of Bosnia, peopled by Serbs, and hemming in Serbia on the west. From that moment Serbia was doomed, unless Europe could succeed in protecting her. Democracy in Serbia could not be 'safe' while the Austrian Empire continued to include a mass of discontented subjects of Serb race who envied the freedom of their brothers over the border, or while a free Serbia formed a barrier to the Austro-German projects in the east. Democracy could be 'safe' only when national freedom was assured, and when the ruthless ambitions of conquering autocracies had been permanently and effectively restrained.

In the Austrian Empire itself the events of the period also illustrated the unreality and the unsatisfactoriness of a system of self-government in a community where its working is not aided by the existence of a strongly realised sentiment of national unity. The system of 1867, which we described in an earlier chapter,[1] had never worked well in either half of the dual monarchy. In the Austrian half the ineradicable antipathies of the component peoples had, in fact, made parliamentary government impossible. In theory the ministry was responsible to Parliament; in practice no ministry had ever been responsible to Parliament, because there had never been a ministry which could command a majority in Parliament. Ministries, therefore, were made by the Crown, and often consisted largely of officials and mere imperial nominees; once and again the Crown was able to plead that government in association with Parliament was in practice impossible, and had in effect dispensed with its aid. It was only by bribing the Poles by the cession of autonomy in Galicia, and a free hand to tyrannise over the Ruthenes of that province, that a working majority was obtainable; and even then, complete deadlocks were frequent. Various schemes of electoral reform were carried, notably in 1883 and in 1896, in the hope that they might produce more workable Parliaments. Finally, in 1907, universal suffrage was established for the Austrian half of the monarchy—the constituencies being gerrymandered so as to secure to the Germans a much larger proportion of seats than their numbers deserved. The theory of this reform was that the enfranchised democracy would disregard national antipathies, and concentrate its attention upon economic demands. But this expectation was not

[1] Chap. vii.

justified by the event; the parliamentary system in Austria remained a failure; the hostility of the under-races, Czechs and Slovenes, towards the dominant Germans, made the transaction of business almost impossible; and government continued to be carried on largely without parliamentary concurrence or control. The malign and dangerous policy which Austria has pursued since 1907, under German influence, has been the policy of a government which in theory was responsible to a democratically elected Parliament; but it has been a policy hateful to the majority of the electors, and aimed at the destruction of some of their dearest hopes. Democracy cannot be 'safe,' it cannot in reality exist at all, except in association with national freedom. In the Hungarian half of the dual monarchy there was no substantial political change during the period; the hard tyranny of the Magyar minority over their subjects of other races continued to be exercised under parliamentary forms. Indeed, it became worse; so that Western Europe, once full of admiration for the Magyars, began to be awakened to the iniquities from which Rumans, Slovaks, Croats, and Serbs had to suffer. There was no amending them, short of the freeing of the subject peoples. And the fear of this made the Magyars ready to risk everything to maintain their ascendancy, and turned them into the willing allies of Germany. The parliamentary system as it was worked in Hungary was a denial of the most fundamental idea of self-government, the co-operation of the whole community, through its freely chosen representatives, in the control of its own destinies. And therefore it was the foe, not the friend, of peace or of liberty.

The most dramatic and impressive event of this eventful period was the outbreak of revolution in Russia as a

result of the failures of the Russo-Japanese War. After promising for a moment to endow Russia with a parliamentary system almost as liberal as those of the Western nations, it left her with a mere shadow and mockery of a Parliament. Yet it brought her into line with the rest of Europe; it gave her at least the beginnings of representative self-government.

Russia, as we have seen, had long been ripe for revolution; no civilised people could permanently submit to such a parody of justice as her corrupt and incompetent autocracy presented. But its worst crime was that it had denied to its subjects the means of preparing themselves for freedom. The mass of the Russian people, peasants and town-dwellers alike, were illiterate, and incapable of criticising or analysing the ideas offered to them. With the exception of the mere handful who had shared in the admirable labours of the Zemstva and Municipal Councils, they were equally devoid of political experience. Worst of all, they had been denied the fundamental boon of a just and impartial system of law, such as can train a people in self-restraint, in respect for mutual rights, and in the habit of pursuing their aims by law-abiding methods. Yet the political ideas of the West were at work among this people. Her 'intellectuals' of the professional classes discussed the political theories of advanced democracy, and for the most part held it to be possible to introduce them at once without preparation. Among the 'proletariat' of the towns, and in a less degree among some of the peasantry, the ideas of Marxian Socialism, in their crudest form, untempered by criticism, had already got some hold; in no country have the sweeping catchwords of Marxianism been less qualified by practical knowledge of affairs. There seemed every

reason to expect that when revolution came in Russia it would assume the most extravagant and destructive forms. What was worst of all was that the fierce repression of government and its dependence upon brute force had cultivated among its opponents a belief in the value of violence. For a long time assassination had appeared to the extremist schools a justifiable weapon; and so far as exiled Russians had taken part in the international movement of democracy, they had been associated rather with Anarchism than with any practical or constructive creed.

When the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War (February 1904) displayed, even in its first events, the shameful incompetence and corruption of the tyrannical bureaucracy, the first overt expression of revolt was the murder of Plehve, the minister most directly associated with the hideous police tyranny which was the worst of Russia's ills. This persuaded the government to attempt a more moderate régime which gave some freedom to discussion. The earliest demand for reforms came from the Zemstva (October 1904). Their demands were extraordinarily moderate. They asked for the rudimentary civil liberties—freedom from punishment without legal trial, freedom of speech and publication; but on the political side they demanded no more than an extension of the functions and of the franchise of the Zemstva themselves. All this had been promised forty years before; if it had been granted then, Russia would have been ready to make an orderly advance towards self-government. Now these palliatives would have been of no effect; and even as it was, the government at first refused to grant them.

But presently (November) the professional classes began

to demand more sweeping reforms ; meetings of doctors, lawyers, teachers, university professors put forward claims to representative institutions like those of the West. Their demand was for a Parliament with full control over the executive, and elected by universal suffrage. This became the programme of the Russian Liberals, who presently organised themselves into a party under the name of Constitutional Democrats, or Cadets. The demand for the sudden introduction of universal suffrage among an illiterate and politically inexperienced populace, spread over the vast spaces of the Russian Empire, showed that its advocates had paid little attention to the history of self-government. The memory of the 1848 revolution in France might have taught them the danger of such a plunge.

But these were the moderates. Presently the workpeople of the towns joined in the agitation. Their first demands were for higher wages and better conditions of labour, but they added to these the full political programme of the professional associations ; and before long had improved even upon these by demanding the election of a Constituent Assembly, with power to create an entirely new system of government.

In January 1905 a vast orderly procession of workpeople to present both economic and political demands to the Tsar was brutally fired upon by the police and the troops, whose loyalty had not yet been shaken. The news of the massacre spread like wildfire over Russia, and set the heather on fire. Strikes broke out in the towns ; railway traffic was dislocated ; in the rural districts bands of peasants marched to burn the barns of their landlords, and to seize their lands for themselves ; everywhere there were murders of police, who, to distract the

vengeance of the mobs, turned them against the Jews in organised *pogroms*. Russia seemed to be lapsing into utter anarchy; and meanwhile, in the East, defeat followed defeat, on sea and land.

The government had to give way. The Tsar issued one manifesto after another, first vaguely promising to invite 'worthy elected persons' to co-operate in making laws, then drafting a scheme for an ineffective legislative body with very limited powers. But the revolution had gone too far for such palliatives. In October 1905 a general strike was declared. It was extraordinarily well observed, not only by workpeople, but by doctors, teachers, bankers, business firms. The life of Russia stopped dead for the moment; and there was nothing for it but surrender. On October 30 a final manifesto promised that the Duma should be elected on a democratic suffrage, that the 'civil liberties' should be at once established, and that the new assembly when it met should have full legislative powers, and control over governmental officials. The victory seemed to be won. Russia had become a self-governing country.

But the turmoil was not to be so easily cured. When the Duma met (May 1906) it consisted, of course, like the French National Assembly of 1789, almost wholly of men who had had no political experience, but were full of sweeping theories. The doctrinaire Liberals, or Cadets, controlled a clear majority; and not content to secure and to bring into working order the very considerable powers they had already won, they devoted their strength to extending these powers in accordance with their theories. At the same time the public disorders which had resulted from the revolution underwent little diminution. The disorganisation of all productive activity and

the prevalence of turmoil alarmed moderate-minded men, and gave to the older forces of government, which were as yet by no means subjugated, some justification for asserting that the weakening of executive power was ruining the country.

The war had meanwhile ended ; and the return of the troops increased the government's confidence. The first Duma was suddenly dissolved. An appeal by a group of its members to the nation to refuse taxes met with little support. The government had the upper hand, and the attempt of a wing of Socialists to set up a reign of terror was firmly crushed. But happily the direction of Russian policy was now in the hands of an able and honest Conservative, Stolypin, whose policy was, while repressing revolution, to guarantee the 'civil rights,' and to work if possible with a modified Duma which should be allowed powers of criticism, but not of control. Such an arrangement, if combined with a frank enlargement of the powers of the Zemstva, would have afforded a useful transition, allowed the revolutionary ferment to subside, and given to the Russian people the opportunity of acquiring political experience, and of testing in the light of this experience the validity of the sweeping theories and catchwords which had obtained dominion over their minds. Stolypin, in short, was an advocate of something like the German system, which represents a stage in political development through which all the self-governing nations have passed.

The Cadets and the peasants, sobered by experience, were now willing to go more quietly. But the bureaucracy, thinking that victory was in its hands, placed many obstacles in Stolypin's path. In March 1907 a second Duma met. Every means was used to influence the

elections; yet a large majority was returned for the popular parties. But the assembly contained few men of experience or ability. The Socialist parties made extravagant proposals; the little group of reactionaries seized every opportunity of provocation, and every means of discrediting the new body. At Court the reactionaries were eager to crush the parliamentary system once for all by an act of force. Thanks to Stolypin, this extreme course was not adopted. But on the pretext that the extremists of the Socialist groups were fundamentally disloyal to the State, the second Duma also was dissolved, after a session of three months. A manifesto from the Tsar announced that it had not been really representative of the wishes of the nation, and that a new electoral system would therefore be devised by the Tsar himself who had granted the Duma, and who remained responsible to God for the government of the State.

The new electoral law was devised for the purpose of producing a moderate and submissive assembly. It aimed at securing the preponderance of the rural elements, and among them of the largest landowners. The system thus established remained substantially the governing system of Russia until the revolution of 1917. It gave to the Duma no sort of control over the government, though its consent was required for legislation. It left these limited powers, in practice, in the hands of a small class. Yet it did at least endow Russia with a representative assembly; and if its members were chiefly drawn from a single class, this class included those who had most practical experience of politics. If the Russian government could have persuaded itself to work cordially with this body, and to be guided by its judgment, a steady progress would have been possible, and the need for the revolution of 1917 might

have been averted. But the ruling bureaucracy retained all its old jealousy of interference or criticism.

Had time been given by Fate for the development of the modest institutions of freedom thus established, it would have been a happy thing for Russia and the world. But the strain and pressure of the European situation denied this. And the heritage of bitterness which the revolution had left gave opportunities for the influence of German intrigues. The governing bureaucracy, itself largely drawn from among the German nobility of the Baltic provinces, and always by tradition German in sympathy, looked upon Germany as the main bulwark of autocracy in Europe. The projects of German ambition were so directly hostile to Russian aims and even to the security of the Russian Empire, that Russia was inevitably driven to take the anti-German side in the crises that succeeded one another during the following years ; inevitably compelled to face the possibility of war, and to prepare for it. But for all that, there remained powerful pro-German elements in the ruling bureaucracy. And as this bureaucracy was profoundly corrupt, Germany could always count upon the assistance of her paid agents in hampering the resistance to her armies ; she was always accurately informed as to the actions and proposals of the Russian government ; and when the time for her destined stroke should come, she could count upon being served by traitors high in the Russian service.

The bureaucracy's jealousy of control was one of the obstacles in the way of the steady development of self-government in Russia. The other was the extravagance of the extremists in the Socialist groups, who, penetrated with the doctrines of Marxianism, would be content with nothing short of the utter overthrow of ' capitalism,' and

the destruction of the existing order of society. Upon these fanatics also Germany was able to play: partly indirectly, through the influence of the International; partly by more direct means, by actual subsidies, by relations with exiles such as Lenin, who had taken refuge in Switzerland, and who was to play so useful a part, from the German point of view, in the revolution of 1917. Thus the two elements hostile to the orderly development of a system of national self-government in Russia, the extreme reactionaries and the extreme revolutionaries, could be, and were, alike made use of in the interests of the great German project. The European situation was disastrous to the political development of Russia. Self-government in Russia could not be made 'safe' until the menace of a conquering militarist autocracy should be conjured away.

On the Turkish revolution of 1908 it is not necessary to say much. When the Young Turk Committee of Order and Progress succeeded in overthrowing the blood-stained tyrant Abdul Hamid, and proceeded to set up a parliamentary system, imitated from Western models, in which all the conflicting races of the Turkish Empire were to be represented, and to be taught to co-operate for the common good, observers in the Western lands were full of enthusiasm: this seemed to be the greatest and the noblest of all the victories of the self-governing principle. It had also the incidental advantage that it seemed likely to undermine or destroy the preponderant influence which Germany had secured at the court of Abdul Hamid, and whose possible results were beginning to be a serious cause of perturbation among those who were not wholly blind to the vast projects which Germany was pursuing.

But the illusion was short-lived. Under the most favourable circumstances, parliamentary government

could not work among peoples so profoundly divided by race and religion, so deeply dissevered by the memories of centuries of oppression and bloodshed ; all the more since nearly the whole of these populations were illiterate, none of them had received any training in self-government, and none of them had known for many centuries even the rudiments of the Reign of Law, or acquired the habit of trusting to anything save brute force or cunning for their own protection. It soon became apparent that the Turkish Parliament was merely the cover not even for the ascendancy of a ruling race, as in Hungary, but for the dominance of a small self-seeking clique of westernised, demoralised and unscrupulous adventurers, among whom Enver and Talaat were the cleverest and the most active. They were perfectly corrupt, and ready to be bought. Moreover, what they knew of soldiering they had learnt from German teachers. It was easy for Germany to establish over them an influence still greater than that which she had wielded over Abdul Hamid. For when all is said, that *rusé* old tyrant was a Turk, deeply mistrustful of all the advances of the West, however ready he might be to make use of them ; and he had the traditional loyalty of his Turkish subjects. But his successors were neither good Turks nor good Mahommedans ; they understood the insecurity of their own power ; while they talked of Order and Progress, their aim was only Dominion and Plunder. They were glad to have the support of a great power to keep their distrustful subjects in subordination. And they were ready to lend themselves to vast schemes of aggrandisement which fell in with their own limitless dreams of conquest. Self-government in the Turkish Empire as a whole, involving the peaceful co-operation of many embittered

and oppressed peoples with the masters who had long tyrannised over them, could never be anything but a fantasy. Self-government even in the potential national units of the empire—Armenia, Anatolia, Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia—could only become possible after a long training in the habit of loyal obedience to law, after a painful unlearning of the modes of life and action bred by centuries of despotism. The Turkish revolution, therefore, marked no advance in self-government. It only intensified the difficulties of the international situation which were straining the system in those countries where it was a reality.

Yet the Turkish revolution was a sign that the ideal of political liberty, born in the West, was beginning to appeal to the imagination of the East, and to be a challenge and an inspiration to peoples among whom, in all the centuries of their history, this conception had never independently emerged. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Europe having conquered the non-European world, the ideals of Europe were conquering the minds of the non-European peoples. And this was in itself a very healthy feature; none the less healthy although, quite naturally, the difficulty of making self-government real, and the conditions of its success, were seldom realised among its new disciples. In India and in Egypt especially the demand for self-governing institutions grew louder, and the problem of dealing with this demand was among the most difficult of the many problems which faced the rulers of the British Empire. The first instinct of every Briton was to recognise the justice of any such demand. For nearly a century past the most thoughtful among British administrators in India had maintained that British rule in that vast land

could only justify itself by its success in training the Indian peoples to govern themselves ; and in Egypt the aim honestly proclaimed when the British occupation commenced was that of turning Egypt into a land capable of managing its own affairs justly and with self-respect. Yet in both countries the conditions were such that the sudden introduction of self-government on a large scale must have led to anarchy and injustice. In both countries the only vocal elements which demanded the change were the small group of Western-educated men, who had swallowed the formulæ of Western politics without much considering how they could be adapted to the deeply rooted customs and traditions of the East ; and these elements broadly represented the old ascendant classes. In both countries the mass of the population, accustomed through untold centuries to submit to the powers above them merely because they were irresistible, were illiterate, and devoid of political knowledge and of the capacity for sane political judgment ; and were therefore likely, under a formal system of self-government, simply to relapse into the old submissive acceptance. In both countries the essential conditions of self-government were only beginning to exist. The habit of regarding Law not as the mere edict of power to be placated or evaded, but as a common interest to be protected and maintained, was being slowly and painfully nursed into existence, but was not yet firmly rooted. The sense of unity or nationhood was growing, but it was still gravely hampered by deep differences of race and language, and by antipathies of caste and creed ; these differences were indeed minimised by common subjection to a firmly administered system of equal law, wielded by a power which stood aloof from them all, but they were not

subdued, and they would break out into the old acerbity if this power abdicated its functions. Finally the peoples of both India and Egypt were lacking in that essential training for national self-government which is afforded by the practice of self-government on a lesser scale.

The time had come for an advance ; but the advance could only be gradual. Some advance was made during these years. It is possible that it might safely have been made more rapid. On the other hand, the dangers of a too rapid advance, in the conditions existing in these lands, were manifestly great. Naturally the advances that were made seemed totally inadequate to theorists who had swallowed whole the democratic doctrine of the West, and who believed that the millennium could be brought about by the sudden and universal diffusion of the right of marking crosses on ballot-papers. Unrest, taking too often the form of conspiracies of violence, as in Russia, was a feature of these years both in India and in Egypt. It had its healthy side ; it showed that a divine discontent was stirring even in the immobile East. But it added to the difficulties and perplexities which surmounted the growth of self-government during these critical years.

Even in the lands where the system of national self-government was most solidly established, this period was one of strain and difficulty. In all the self-governing countries of Europe, but most notably in Britain, France, and Italy, the acrid criticism of the parliamentary system, and the widespread dissatisfaction with its working, which we have seen arising in the preceding period, grew in strength. In many circles it had become almost a commonplace to say that ' parliamentarism ' and party government had proved themselves failures. This pessimism contrasted markedly with the ineffable complacency

with which the Germans had learnt to regard their system ; and it is necessary to examine its sources with honesty and care.

One broad fact must impress us at the outset of any such analysis. The countries in which this dissatisfaction was most widely felt and expressed were the countries which were most exposed to the dangers of war, and to the exasperating and wasteful burden of preparing for it. The one State in which there was a widespread satisfaction with the existing system—Germany—was the one State which was organised primarily with a view to war ; the countries in which dissatisfaction was widespread were the countries whose system contemplated a normal state of peace, and for whom the cost and strain of endless preparation for war formed a maddening distraction from the primary aims they had set before themselves. Thus the international situation, which was mainly due to German policy, was placing the gravest difficulties in the way of the satisfactory working of self-governing institutions. It was making the world ' unsafe for democracy.'

The criticism of parliamentary government mainly came, in all the liberal countries, from two opposite sources. On the one hand, the classes which had formerly enjoyed political supremacy, and which had been allowed to retain it in effect during the early stages of the development of democracy, were alarmed by the growing political activity of the masses, by the power of their organisations, and, especially, by the prevalence of the ugly doctrines of class-war. They found it difficult to resign themselves to a system of national co-operation in which they would be hopelessly outnumbered, especially as democracy was widely interpreted in the sense of mere class-ascendancy, the ascendancy of the necessarily ignorant masses which

even the Radical Mill had regarded with dread. They used their immense influence, naturally and in some degree healthily, to resist this tendency ; they owned and directed a large part of the Press ; they were still able to bring great pressure to bear upon the directors of political parties. In the eyes of eager reformers, they seemed still to possess a complete mastery over the instruments of government. But they felt their position insecure ; and this insecurity brought forth from their side a great stream of criticism of the working of parliamentary institutions. By a thousand scribes the world was taught to distrust the whole race of ' politicians,' who were represented as a crowd of needy and self-seeking office-hunters. There was enough truth in this view to make it appear plausible ; men are always attracted by the rewards of public office, as well as by its opportunities. But this applies in a less rather than a greater degree to democratic than to other societies ; salary may tempt a man to be false to his beliefs yet more potently in a bureaucratic system like the German than in a parliamentary system like the British ; and the oxen that tread out the people's corn are far more effectively muzzled in the Britain of to-day than they were in the aristocratic Britain of the eighteenth century, when pensions and sinecures were regarded as the natural spoil of all the connections of men in power. A curious feature of the period was the rising prejudice against ' lawyer-politicians ' ; for in all the parliamentary countries, in France, Italy and America yet more than in Britain, the lawyers played a part in politics out of all proportion to their numbers. This was natural enough : law has, of all professions, the most direct relation with politics ; and the legal profession was almost the only one wherein a man of ability and public spirit could hope to earn an adequate

livelihood while devoting a large part of his time to public affairs. But the prejudice against lawyer-politicians was worked for all it was worth ; the label was used as an argument ; and nobody seemed to see that other labels might be used in an equally damning way, and that ' landowner - politicians,' ' stockbroker - politicians ' or ' linen-draper-politicians ' might with equal plausibility be represented as a public danger. But it was plain that all this was merely a mode of expressing a growing distrust of the parliamentary machine, which was due primarily to the fact that the parliamentary machine was being turned with increasing boldness to new ends, and, secondarily, to the fact that the machine did, in truth, need repair.

From the other side distrust in the parliamentary system was fomented by the growing prevalence of the doctrine of class-war, and by the sedulously encouraged belief that, despite the apparently democratic machinery of the electoral system, the engine of power was, in fact, controlled by the secret forces of ' capitalism.' This theory, the exact opposite of the other, could be plausibly maintained by a judicious exaggeration of the undoubted influence which was wielded by large contributors to party funds, and by the vague power of High Finance. Distrust of the machinery of self-government, fomented by the constant criticism of the Press, led to a growing readiness to resort to violence, and to an undermining of the habit of observing and maintaining the laws until they could be altered by the conversion of the electorate, which is the very foundation of self-government.

In France, where the revolutionary tradition was always strong, a new philosophy of violence was preached by Georges Sorel and his disciples of the Syndicalist movement. Impatient of attaining the vague and vast

ends which Marx had foreshadowed, they borrowed from him only his purely materialist view of history, his distrust of 'Utopias,' or clearly realised ideals for the future, and his belief in the value of war for its own sake; more logical than the Marxians, they altogether rejected the idea of working through Parliament, and advocated ceaseless war for its own sake, in every industry, by means of strikes and *sabotage*. These doctrines, utterly fatal to the very notion of national co-operation, wielded a great influence in France and in Italy, where they led to much industrial disorder and afforded powerful arguments to the advocates of reaction. They had some influence in Britain also, though here they tended to assume the more rational form of a theory that organised labour should strive to obtain control of each industry, and thus to establish 'industrial self-government.' Even where Syndicalist doctrines obtained little or no influence, there was a growing readiness to resort to what were called 'direct methods'; and strikes on a vast scale, whose aim seemed to be not merely to force the hand of the employers, but to hold the whole community to ransom by stopping the supply of universal necessities like coal, or interrupting essential public services like the railways, became common features in most of the great industrial States, and began to be used (as in Russia in 1905) as a means of securing political ends, by the use of force instead of persuasion.

Nor was it only in the industrial sphere that this readiness to resort to violence displayed itself. The Ulstermen organised themselves under arms to resist an Act of Parliament; the opposite party responded in kind, and among their followers the extremists of the Sinn Fein group began to conceive the idea of using this weapon to

establish a complete political independence for which the great majority of Irishmen had no desire. The suffragettes entered upon the policy of proving that they were likely to make a good use of the franchise by breaking windows, slashing knives through Old Masters, and burning down churches. The Nonconformists who objected to the provisions of an Education Act refused to pay a part of their taxes, and heroically allowed their teapots to be confiscated rather than loyally submit to the law until they should be able to alter it. Everywhere minorities seemed to show a new and alarming readiness to defy the law and to dislocate the whole working of society, if they could, in order to get their own way. The very foundations of organised society seemed to be threatened. Was *this* the result of self-government? Was *this* the mode in which democracy was to work? It seemed to be so. The one country which was practically undisturbed by these disorders was Germany, the land of discipline. The moral seemed obvious. Parliamentarism was a failure. Upon this reactionaries and revolutionaries were agreed. But none of them had any substitute to recommend.

Yet despite these ominous and perturbing features, and despite the intensifying strain and pressure of the international situation, there was a steady advance during these years, in the countries where democracy was furthest developed, both in the co-operation of various wings of the progressive parties for common parliamentary action, and in the boldness with which the powers of government were employed for new purposes of social reconstruction.

In France, one of the most striking political features of the period was the definite co-operation of a large group of Parliamentary Socialists in the work of government; which implied that the attitude of mere negation and

blind hostility was being abandoned. Socialists took their place as members of ministries, or as Prime Ministers. They took their full part in the two most notable legislative activities of the period. One of these was the final severance of Church and State. If this was carried out with a perhaps needless severity, the cause was to be found in the tradition which linked the Church with political reaction. The result was the alienation from the democratic State of some of its most valuable elements; in the strain and anxiety of this time, the self-governing State could not afford to be generous to those whom it regarded as its domestic foes. The second main activity of the period was the beginning of a process of social reorganisation, due to the combination of the moderate Socialists with the hitherto purely political Radicals. The hours of labour were restricted; the conditions of public health and the housing of the poor were brought under supervision; schemes for an adequate provision for the aged and infirm were introduced; and, perhaps most important of all, great advances were made in popular education. But one great obstacle stood in the way of these fruitful advances. They were costly; and all the resources of the community were needed to prepare against the ever-present menace of a destructive war. Thus the progress of social reform, which would have done more than anything to ease the working of self-government, and to make the nation conscious of its communal responsibilities, was hampered and retarded by the root cause of all the unrest of these unhappy years.

In Britain, also, the same features are perceptible, in a more acute form. During these years the old doctrine of *laisser-faire* in economic and social matters, which had never in actual fact enjoyed so great a dominion as it

had in theory, was definitely abandoned by responsible leaders of all schools. The new spirit was demonstrated, before the Conservative Reaction came to its close in 1906, by the valuable Education Act of 1902, which created the beginning of a logical and efficient system of national education. It is noteworthy that this system, instead of being carried out in a uniform manner under the direction of a central bureaucracy, as in France and Germany, was entrusted to the administration of local authorities, whose power was thus magnified, and which were not merely permitted but encouraged to make experiments, and to develop along lines of their own. If there was a loss of immediate efficiency under this system, it was, in the British view, more than balanced by the variety and freedom which it encouraged. Other measures also showed that the Conservatives were ready to use the power of the State for the reform of the social order ; this was a part of the motive even for the Tariff Reform movement which ultimately wrecked the Conservative ministry, because the bulk of the democracy would have nothing to do with it.

But the new era was still more definitely proclaimed by the appearance, in 1906, of a strong and distinctly organised Labour Party in Parliament, whose members, though few of them were Socialists in the continental sense, were united in the resolve to use the power of the State for social reorganisation, and to insist that the special point of view of wage-earning labour should be more directly considered than heretofore. Meanwhile, British Liberalism had almost wholly shed its old *laisser-faire* doctrines ; and hence it came about that the new Labour Party, though separately organised under a far more rigid discipline than the older parties, became in

practice simply an independent left wing of Liberalism, giving its steady support to the Liberal ministry, and, on the other hand, strengthening and enforcing its loyalty to its new principles. This new situation, and especially the emergence and the rigid organisation of the Labour Party, filled many timid souls with fears. But the Labour men soon made it plain that they were no headstrong revolutionaries, vowed to a programme of mere wrecking and destruction. Their solid sense, honesty, courage, and public spirit won the respect of Parliament and of the nation. Apart from a handful of doctrinaires of the International and Marxian school, theirs was not the programme of ruthless 'class-war' for its own sake, but of national co-operation in reconstruction.

The years following 1906 were, in regard to legislation, the most active in the history of the British Parliament. Old age pensions were provided at the cost of the State: a huge scheme of insurance against invalidity and unemployment, more generous that that of Germany, was set up; towns and rural districts were given powers to reconstruct themselves on saner plans; trade boards were established to put an end to 'sweating'; free Labour Exchanges were set up all over the country to facilitate employment; new facilities for the creation of agricultural small holdings were devised; elaborate provisions were enacted for the protection of child life, and the community undertook the responsibility for feeding hungry children and for giving them medical attention; main roads were reconstructed; there were schemes for scientific afforestation. Here was a whole code of social legislation, such as would have terrified the politicians of an earlier generation. It terrified some of the politicians of this. For it cost vast sums; and this at a time when

the burden of national defence grew yearly more heavy. This caused the advocates of social reorganisation to be distrustful of expenditure on defence ; it caused those who were conscious of the menace of war to grudge expenditure upon social needs ; and this opposition seemed to confirm the view that ' capitalism ' and ' militarism ' were sworn allies, and to give further support to the doctrine of the class-war. Even in wealthy Britain, safe, as it appeared, behind the shield of the navy, the international strain thus increased the friction which must in any case have been caused by this new use to which the power of democracy was being put.

For so great a revolution of spirit and method could not be effected without arousing bitter opposition. It aroused all the more because these sweeping measures were in many cases hastily constructed, and inadequately discussed in an overburdened legislative body ; because they were sometimes advocated with an unhappy vehemence which intensified instead of allaying the hostility of classes ; and because the means for defraying their immense cost could only be secured by a bold attack upon accumulated wealth. Nor were these the only causes of embitterment in the controversies of these years. With the social programme was linked an equally drastic series of political changes : the cession of complete self-government to the recently conquered provinces of South Africa ; the enlargement of public participation in the government of India ; the disestablishment and partial disendowment of the Church in Wales, which seemed to many to threaten a similar attack upon the national Church in England, and a severance between Church and State like that which had come about in France ; above all, the proposal, backed by an overwhelming majority in the

House of Commons, of a scheme of Home Rule for Ireland which threatened, whether it passed or was rejected, to produce civil war in that distressful land. These wholesale projects of social and political revolution, as they seemed to the timid eyes of men who had not yet witnessed the vaster changes and demands of war, inevitably aroused all the forces of resistance ; and the centre of these was the House of Lords, the last stronghold, as it seemed to one school, of privilege and class ascendancy in self-governing Britain ; the last bulwark, as it seemed to others, against revolutionary madness.

The House of Lords had survived through the period of constitutional reconstruction which had filled the nineteenth century, because during that period it had been very timid in the use of its powers. But during the last generation it had become both weaker and stronger : weaker because its composition showed no such balance of opposed views as existed in the country ; stronger because it now included not only the magnates of land, but also the magnates of trade, and seemed to be able to speak for the massed wealth of the country, as against the massed votes of the disinherited. It had with impunity reduced the Liberal ministry of 1892-95 to impotence. It had even ventured to reject some of the proposals of the huge House of Commons majority of 1906. But its culminating stroke was the rejection of the Budget of 1909. By this act it invaded the prerogative of control over finance which had been held, by the custom of more than two centuries, to belong exclusively to the Commons ; and with it the prerogative of dismissing ministries, the possession of which by the Commons had formed the keystone of the whole British system. This was revolution. On the other hand, it could reasonably be contended that as finance was being

made the chief engine of a revolution, a Second Chamber which could not make its opinion felt on financial questions must be deprived of the power of performing one of its chief functions.

On the issue thus raised, which embodied and brought to a head all the other issues at once, a violent storm of controversy raged for two years[1]; nor was it ended by the passage of the Parliament Act of 1911, whereby the powers of the House of Lords, not merely in finance but in the rejection or revision of legislation, were seriously curtailed. The controversy probed far deeper than the mere action or powers of the House of Lords, or the projects for its reconstruction, or the merits and demerits of the Budget, and the scheme of change which rested upon it. For some of the fundamental usages of the British system had been challenged, and the challenge raised a debate upon the whole working of the system. The House of Lords, no doubt, ought to be altered. But how? By a mere limitation of its powers, or by a reconstruction of its membership? That question involved the question of the need for, and the functions of, a Second Chamber; which in its turn involved a discussion of the powers and working of the First Chamber, and of the relations of both to Cabinets and parties. Could the House of Commons itself, men asked, be regarded as in any strict sense representative of the nation? Were not its growingly apparent deficiencies due in part to its unrepresentative character? Its members were elected by constituencies which normally had no choice except between the candidates of two artificially organised parties; if more candidates than two presented themselves, the representative of a minority

[1] An attempt to analyse these problems is made in *Peers and Bureaucrats* (Constable, 1910).

might easily be returned, and even he might only have received the votes of his supporters because there was nobody available who more nearly represented their opinions. When the elected members came up to Westminster, all their most important votes seemed to be determined beforehand by the secret caucus of their party. Could this be called a true representation of the nation ? Were not the critics of parliamentarism, whether reactionaries or revolutionaries, justified by the facts ? The conclusion seemed plausible, and it helped to weaken still further men's already declining belief in the representative system. Again, was it not manifest that on such a system it was impossible to determine what was the real will of the nation upon even the greater issues. At the most the electors gave the preference to one or another of two groups of men, having no further choice. That was what parliamentary government under the party system implied.

And, indeed, we must recognise that there is much truth in these criticisms. No workable electoral system that can be devised will make it possible to reflect exactly every variation in the opinions of a whole nation ; or if such a system existed, it must produce a chaotic body, incapable of maintaining any coherent government in power, or of criticising and controlling its actions. No electoral system can enable the electorate to express its opinion on every measure of public importance, nor is the electorate of any modern State capable of forming a useful opinion upon such a multitude of complex themes. It can only find representatives with whose general standpoint it agrees, and trust them to act in the spirit of their commission ; and upon the whole the party system presents the best means, even though it is a rather arbitrary means, of defining clearly the attitude of various aspirants for this

trust. And it is the greatest safeguard against the abuse of the function thus devolved upon the leaders of parties, that they dare not propose measures which will completely alienate public support without paying for their blunders, and that they dare not depart from the undertakings they have given without suffering for it. With all its defects, the representative system as it worked in Britain did provide a means of ensuring that government should not be conducted in a way disapproved by the nation.

The criticism of the representative system was exaggerated. But there was enough substance in it to justify the citizens of a living and growing society in discussing with ardour the possibility of removing its defects, and the means of making it answer more closely to the movement of the nation's mind.

One such means seemed to be the provision of a really efficient Second Chamber which should qualify the unrepresentative character of the First Chamber, and be able to revise its proposals, and if necessary refer them to the electorate. Nine out of ten reasonable men were ready to agree that such a body was desirable ; eight of the nine (if they could divest their minds of party considerations) would add that the House of Lords was not capable of performing such functions adequately in a democratic society ; but no two of the eight could agree as to the means by which such a body could best be obtained, or as to the powers it should enjoy. This vital problem was still unsolved, having been swept aside by other and more immediately urgent problems, when the whole arguing crew of the ship of State were swept together over the cataract of the Great War.

There were some who found a solution for these difficulties in the proposal that disputed measures should be

submitted to the electorate by a *referendum*, after the manner already applied in Switzerland and elsewhere. But this must have the effect of accentuating the weakness of the representative body, instead of amending it. Moreover, a popular electorate cannot profitably discuss the details of complex legislative proposals; it is often upon the details that controversy hinges; and even if the issues were to be put to the electors in an abbreviated and simplified form, all must depend upon who has the drafting of the questions. This question, also, had not yet been seriously discussed when the great crisis arose. Others, again, professed to find the root of all evil in the party system, which it became a commonplace, in many circles, to condemn. But nobody could put forward an alternative to it which would maintain the advantage of coherent government exposed to continuous and responsible criticism—an advantage which the party system undeniably secures—or which would avoid the dangers of a system of shifting and corruptible groups. Nobody could suggest a means whereby men who held the same beliefs could be prevented from acting together, and organising to secure the victory of their cause. What was usually in the minds of the oppugners of the party system was seldom more than the naïve but unhelpful notion that if everybody agreed with themselves, the well-being of the nation would be assured.

Nor were these the only problems of government that were becoming urgent. The enlargement of governmental functions was necessarily bringing about a vast enlargement both of the numbers and of the functions of bureaucracy; and the problems of the place which bureaucracy should occupy in the British system, the ways in which the bureaucrats should be selected and

trained, the modes in which they should be controlled, and the congenital dangers of bureaucratic government guarded against, by the establishment of a satisfactory relationship between the public offices and the supreme Parliament, were rising into practical importance.

And alongside of all these problems of organisation was the deeper problem, now perturbing all thinking men, which was raised by the manifest increase in the willingness of large sections of the community to resort to violent means of getting their own way. At a time when the nation was addressing itself to the task of reorganising the economic basis of its life, and when it was realising that the traditional machinery of self-government needed a good deal of overhauling if it was to perform this work with efficiency and justice, considerable elements in a nation which had always prided itself upon its respect for law seemed to be losing this respect—seemed to be abandoning that willingness to trust to argument and persuasion for the securing of their ends, and that loyalty to the decision of the majority until the majority can be persuaded to change its mind, which is the very foundation of self-government. There was only one means by which these dangerous tendencies could be subdued ; and this was by the restoration of that confidence in the system which had been undermined by recent events, and by the defects which the strain of the times was displaying in the system itself.

Here was, indeed, a crisis in the fortunes of self-government. The oldest of the self-governing nations was engaged in a debate upon fundamentals. It was a profitable and useful debate. It arose naturally out of the fact that government was assuming functions far more complex, and far more deeply affecting the daily

life of its subjects, than ever before. Carried on by a people in whom the experience of centuries had bred the habits of reasonable compromise and good sense, it would doubtless have led to useful results if it could have been conducted in an atmosphere of security and good-will. An efficient reorganisation of the procedure of the House of Commons ; a frank use of devolution to reduce the burden of its work, such as the strength of local institutions in Britain rendered practicable ; a reconstruction of the Second Chamber ; a reasonable modification of the rigidity of party such as might be readily secured by regulations as to the use and publicity of party funds : all these things would without doubt soon have been achieved. But the great debate had to be carried on against the background of German preparations, and the suspicions, not only among States, but among parties and interests within the State, which the nightmare of impending disaster fomented. The transition of self-government through one of the crises in its development could not be easily or safely achieved in the presence of such a menace. Even for the rich island-state, with its long traditions of ordered freedom, these years showed that the world had yet to be made safe for democracy.

Germany looked on with interest, not unmixed with contempt. She suffered scarcely at all from these sources of disorganisation. The land of firmly rooted authority, raised high above the storms of popular passion, the land of disciplined obedience, was confirmed by this spectacle of the apparent decrepitude of parliamentary government in its ineffable belief in the superiority of its own institutions. Parliamentarism was a manifest and patent failure. The strong State which had kept itself free of the pestilence might hope to profit by its ravages

among her rivals. She supplied arms and secret encouragement to the embattled parties in Ireland. She watched with gleeful contempt the antics of the suffragettes. She was persuaded that when her day came she would have to deal with decadent, disorganised, and disunited peoples, who would be easily overthrown. She would show that the world was *not* safe for democracy.

But even in Germany there were misgivings ; even in Germany the demand for an enlargement of self-government was growing in an alarming way. The number of the Social Democrats was increasing ; on the eve of the war they had one hundred and ten members in the Reichstag ; they were already the most numerous of the parties, and it seemed possible that they would before long command a majority. Tamed as they were by all the influences that surrounded them, and ready to be the instruments of government in the expansion of German greatness, they nevertheless stood for an idea which would cut at the roots of the German system : they demanded that government should be responsible to the Reichstag. If they should ever attain a definite majority, and still persist in this demand, they might make the conduct of government on the old lines very difficult ; for it would then be impossible for autocracy to maintain a working majority by playing off the parties against one another, as it had long done. In that event, the autocracy would be faced by the unpleasant alternative of either submitting, or boldly disregarding the Reichstag, as Bismarck had disregarded the Prussian Landtag in the years 1862-66. Submission would mean the overthrow of the most distinctive features of the German system : the unchecked power which was wielded by government over the minds and bodies of its subjects, and the steady

consistency with which it pursued the supreme end of extending German power in the world, undeflected by popular clamours, and unhampered by the necessity of exposing its plans to criticism. It would mean that Germany would be reduced to the level of the parliamentary States, whose policy was liable to be varied in accordance with changes in public opinion. On the other hand, direct resistance to a standing majority in the Reichstag opened a vista of conflict and disturbance, and might imperil the ascendancy of government over the minds of its subjects. Even Bismarck could not permanently have resisted the majority in the Landtag; he was, in the end, only able to still opposition by giving it intoxicating draughts of military success. The analogy was suggestive. Victories still more dazzling than Bismarck's would remove all danger of a new challenge to autocracy. It is probable that the anxiety aroused among the governing circles of Germany by the growing strength of the Socialists formed one of the motives for undertaking the great adventure of the war. Thus, in Germany as elsewhere, the aggressive and conquering programme of the German government was hostile to the development of democracy.

If, during these years, the rulers of Germany felt some qualms of anxiety regarding the growth of democratic sentiment in their own country, there were also to be heard whispers of discontent with the wonderful Prussian system, not only among the Socialists, but in other and more unlikely quarters. The system brought wealth, prosperity, national strength and prestige, and the intoxicating dreams of coming triumphs. But might it not be that these material boons were purchased at too great a cost? Was it in the end good for the mind and soul of

a nation that it should be so regulated and controlled, so cosseted, so held in leading-strings? 'In my opinion,' a National Liberal deputy said in the Reichstag in 1910, 'the reform which we need is that we should be governed less than now. . . . We are in danger of being suffocated by all the love and care bestowed upon us. Who can be sure as he lays himself down to sleep at night that he is not transgressing some police regulation or other. . . . And yet we boast that we are a mature people!' Here spoke the misgiving of a man who, without penetrating very deeply, felt that individuality and character were being starved by the very efficiency of autocracy. The misgiving obtained a more penetrating expression, a few years before the war, from a distinguished German educationalist, Dr. Friedrich Paulsen. Discussing the popularity in Germany of brutal, immoral and violent types of literature, and the influence of the philosophy of violence of which Nietzsche was the greatest exponent, he attributed it to the dangerous moral condition produced by over-discipline. An over-regulated nation, like an over-regulated boy, is tempted to throw off all restraints and give the rein to its worst passions when the opportunity for indulging them occurs. 'The picture offered by our people,' Paulsen wrote, 'is certainly not edifying. A healthy, free people, conscious of its power, is not on the one hand so tame and cowed, nor on the other so wild in its literary pleasures. It is the dulled, anæmic, starved body which yearns for stupefaction by indulgence in strong drinks.' Rightly regarded, this is a report upon the condition of a nation more ominous than any of the superficial indications of restlessness and disorganisation which we have noted among the self-governing peoples. And Dr. Paulsen might have found, in the official criminal

statistics of his country, still more perturbing evidence than that afforded by its literature of the demoralising influences of the Prussian system, and the worship of mere brute force which it inspired. In the year 1911 over 172,000 persons were convicted in Germany of aggravated assaults and similar offences; the corresponding figure for England and Wales for the same year was 1720. Again, in that one year more murders were committed in Germany by boys between the ages of twelve and eighteen than were committed in England and Wales by persons of all ages and both sexes. Yet again, in 1911 there were in Germany 14,872 cases of violence against women: the corresponding number in England and Wales was 562. Such facts as these were, in the years before the war, arousing grave anxiety among German social students. It may be said that they cannot fairly be attributed to the influence of a system of government. But behind the system of government is the spirit which inspires it. In Germany this was the spirit of belief in violence, worship of brute force, disregard of right; and we have seen with what persistent subtlety this spirit was transfused through the whole nation by way of the schools and the barracks. We have seen its results in the orgy of bestiality and cruelty into which the manhood of Germany has willingly plunged during the war. For a long time men found it impossible to believe that a civilised nation could so conduct itself. Is not the horror in some degree illumined and explained by the indications which were already emerging before the war of the moral effects of the German social and political system?

At the opening of the new century the contrast between the effects of self-government and autocracy was being very clearly displayed. Externally, and in material

things, the advantage seemed to lie on the side of autocracy, which was able to organise with supreme efficiency the whole resources of the nation for the pursuit of material advantage, and to indoctrinate it with the fundamentally immoral belief that wrong may be justified by success, and that power is the only thing that matters in the world. Over against this definitely conceived and strenuously pursued aim, the ideal of the self-governing States seemed to be hopelessly vague and unattainable; since it bade the peoples who had taken it as their guide to organise their own well-being in co-operation, and to pursue as their supreme aim not Power, but Justice, a goddess who continually evades her pursuers, though she exalts and ennobles them in the pursuit. In the complex and closely interrelated life of the unified modern world, these two conceptions could not exist side by side. The world could not be 'safe for democracy' so long as the other ideal dominated a powerful and aggressive nation; what was more, the disciples of the opposite faith were realising that the world could not be safe for autocracy, so long as the alluring ideals of freedom, justice and brotherhood were allowed to play upon the minds of their submissive subjects. It was from the side of autocracy that the challenge came; a challenge to a life and death struggle, the last ordeal of self-government, which could not be evaded or refused.

X

THE SUPREME ISSUE

THE world was slow to appreciate the full significance of the Great War. At first it appeared to many as a mere conflict of power between two rival groups of States, the most colossal that had ever taken place, but not essentially different in kind from many earlier conflicts; and the States which were so fortunate as not to be involved believed that it was their duty, to themselves and to the world, to hold aloof, with what patience they could muster, until the madness should wear itself out, and the world should return to its old jog-trot. Even now, in the fourth year of the struggle, this shallow view is not dead; it is implicit in the attitude of the little groups of self-satisfied pacifists which are to be found in all the belligerent countries, and the few surviving neutrals still pathetically cling to it. But the world as a whole has realised that the issues are far more fundamental than any mere rivalry of power; and that the whole character and future development of our civilisation hang in the balance. That is why almost the whole world is ranged on the same side in the conflict: a League of Nations, of almost all races and tongues, is already in existence, and what has formed this League—what could alone have formed it—is the belief that the common interests of the whole world, now unified politically and economically as never before, are at stake.

For the war has brought to a crisis, simultaneously, all

the great political ideals of western civilisation which have gradually emerged during the last four centuries. Their emergence and development have given significance to the history of these centuries. They seemed to have won their victory during the nineteenth century, to have attained at last a clear definition, and to have been accepted as the guiding principles of politics by the conscience of civilisation, not in Europe only, but in a great degree throughout the world. The first of these ideals is the principle of nationality, which asserts that the unity of sentiment which we call the national spirit constitutes the only sound basis for the organisation of the State. The second is the international principle, which asserts that the interests of the whole civilised world are essentially one, and endeavours to protect the rights of all by international co-operation and by the maintenance of an international system of law. The third is the principle of self-government, which asserts that all peoples whose traditions and training make it possible ought to have a full and effective share in the control of their own destinies. The fourth we may call the principle of the tutelage of the European peoples over the non-European world, and it asserts that the mastery of the whole world which western civilisation has won by virtue of its inherent superiority ought to be wielded not with a view solely to the material advantage of the ruling races, but with a view to training the subject peoples to play their parts as free members of a world-society ; that, in short, it should be wielded in the spirit of the trustee, not of the slave-owner.

Because these ideals, which have been struggling for expression during four centuries, had at last attained to clear definition, the defiance and repudiation of them which is involved in the aggressive aims of Germany is at

once far more open, far more deliberate, and far more dangerous than that which was involved in any earlier attempt of a superficially similar kind. A German victory would not merely destroy all hope of the satisfaction of national aspirations in the troubled region of eastern and south-eastern Europe; it would imperil and impair the freedom of the oldest and most solidly established nations of Europe. The German conduct of the war has from the very outset been marked by the most brutal disregard of every principle of international law: 'International law no longer exists,' said the Kaiser himself to Mr. Gerard; it is Germany who has destroyed it, and, without much disguise, Germany aims at substituting her own dictation for the co-operative agreement of the civilised world. Germany is the supreme type of an efficiently organised autocracy; her system denies to the people all control over the direction of national policy; and if she succeed in holding her own against the banded democracies of the world, not only will the chains of autocracy be firmly welded upon the German people and their vassals, but self-government will appear to be proved a failure, or at all events a premature experiment, in other lands also, and it will have to be abandoned or gravely qualified in order that the now free peoples may organise themselves for a further struggle. Finally, as Germany has shown herself in the past utterly ruthless in the exploitation of her subject peoples, her victory would initiate an era of ruthless exploitation of the non-European world with a view to future war, in which, in self-defence, all peoples would have to share, and the supremacy of Europe over the non-European world would become an intolerable burden and curse, which would not be long endured.

Of all these momentous issues, the greatest is that of

self-government. It is the greatest because, as events have very clearly shown, the rival principle, that of autocracy, is in truth the source of all our woes. A despotism, or a caste-ascendancy, may be, and often has been, a necessary stage in the education of a people; necessary for the welding of national unity, and for the creation of the habit of obedience to law. But it is only among undeveloped or ill-organised peoples that it usefully serves these purposes; and even then, the autocracy or the caste, by its very nature, tends to think primarily of the extension of its power, and to cultivate the well-being of the community only as a means to that end. In a highly developed and well-organised society the ascendancy of an autocrat or of a caste is no longer necessary for the purposes which justify its existence at an earlier stage. But its inherent love of power still exists; and if it can communicate this passion to the people whom it rules, if it can achieve an effective control over their minds and their resources, it will become a tenfold greater menace to all its neighbours, just because the power for mischief of a highly developed society is tenfold greater than that of a backward people. Such a menace the German autocracy had long been to all the self-governing States; we have seen how, even in times of peace, it had made the world 'unsafe for democracy,' and in war it threatened the very existence of all the free States. No self-governing community could ever become such a menace. Self-governing societies may be, and often are, carried away by momentary gusts of emotion; they may be inspired by jealousy or prejudice or greed, they may be intoxicated for a time by the sense of power. But by their very nature it is impossible for them to pursue a single dominating end with the unrelenting per-

sistence, secrecy and inflexibility which is possible for an autocratic government; for the essence of the self-governing system is that it is controlled by ever-varying currents of opinion, which set, on the whole, and despite frequent deflections, in the direction of justice. And in particular it is impossible for a self-governing community to be in permanent antipathy to the causes of national freedom or international co-operation, which are inspired ultimately by the same ideals as self-government itself. The survival of autocracy, therefore, in a highly developed community is the root cause of all these dangers. The world was slow to see this; nor was it plainly and boldly enunciated until the entry of America into the war. It is to President Wilson that we owe the pregnant statement that the world must be made 'safe for democracy,' and that this is the root of the whole matter. And the world can only be 'safe for democracy' when autocracy, with its fundamentally vicious ideals, has been banished from among the highly developed States. Democratic self-government is not, in any of the guises which it has assumed, a perfect form of government. It is as yet in its infancy, even in the lands where it has existed longest, and whose peoples have been most fully trained to participate in it. It has many troubles and difficulties yet before it. It will never, perhaps, attain to the mechanical efficiency which, in favouring circumstances, autocracy can attain. But it pursues the ideals of freedom and justice; and this of itself more than balances its defects. Only by its victory can the world be freed from the poisonous influence of the Doctrine of Power, which has hung like a miasma over almost all its history.

The war, then, is in the last resort a duel to the death between the principles of autocracy and self-government,

neither of which can feel itself safe while the other remains unfettered. It was but slowly that the free peoples realised this ; but the autocrats, or those whose ideal was autocracy, saw it very quickly, and wherever there were forces that dreaded the triumph of self-government, there Germany found helpers and allies. In Greece the camarilla which surrounded the worthless king and his German wife, were willing to betray their allies, to play the traitor to the powers to whom Greece owed her existence, and to sell the obvious interests of their country, in order that royal power might win a victory over the hated leader of democracy. In Spain, while popular feeling in the more advanced centres was all on the side of the Allies, the knot of politicians who rig the nominal machinery of self-government to suit their own purposes were partisans of Germany, ready even to wink at her being supplied from their coasts with the means of sinking Spanish ships, if by that means the defeat of self-government might be attained. In Italy it was among the clericals and the reactionaries that Germany found her main strength, though she was aided also by the fanatics of International Socialism.

But it was in Russia that the position of Germany as the champion of autocracy exercised the most remarkable influence. The vital interests of Russia were threatened by the German challenge, and it was against Russia that this challenge was in the first instance directed. Yet because Russia was ruled by an autocracy which felt its own position insecure, dreaded the victory of the principle of self-government even more than military defeat and humiliation, and feared that the downfall of Germany might be followed by the downfall of despotism in Russia itself, its agents were half-hearted in the pursuit of victory,

and some of them were even ready to become the secret agents of the enemy. Because of this distraction of interest, Russia failed, after the first few months, to play her proper part in the struggle ; while at the same time her membership of the Grand Alliance discredited its free members in the eyes of the neutral world, and seemed to stultify their claim to be fighting for liberty. Half-heartedness, corruption and frank treason combined to produce the Russian disasters of 1915. When the existing organs of self-government in Russia, the emasculated Duma, and the rigidly limited Zemstva, tried to remedy the deficiencies which were due to the bureaucracy, they were checked and hampered in every possible way. Finally the very fact of defeat was used by strong elements in the Russian ruling class as an excuse for negotiating for a separate peace, in the hope of saving Tsarism by making friends with the formidable champion of autocracy. This would have been the greatest betrayal in history, and it might have brought about the ruin of all the great causes for which the Allies were fighting. It was avoided only by the sudden revolutionary upheaval of March 1917, which swept Tsarism aside, and by ranging Russia among the democratic States, isolated Germany and her vassals as the only surviving States of Europe which still repudiated the ideal of self-government, and made the great issue clearer to the world than it had hitherto been.

The Russian Revolution is an event too complex, too confused, and as yet too undetermined in its issues, to be profitably discussed in this place. Its first results were political chaos, and a dislocation of the country's military system even worse than that which had been due to the corruption of the old régime. The Russian people

had been denied every opportunity of political education ; and there was no organised power capable of taking the place of the old organs of government which had been destroyed. The city mobs and the illiterate peasant soldiery, who now controlled the course of events, identified liberty with the mere abolition of all discipline, and of all restraints upon their action ; and they fell an easy prey to the catchwords of International Socialism, whose fluent exponents were the conscious or unconscious catspaws of the German government. If in its first movements the Russian Revolution seemed to be a supreme triumph for the cause of self-government, the chaos which followed largely undid this conviction, because it showed the dangers to which an undisciplined democracy is liable, and reminded men that the first necessity for the maintenance of organised society is that there should be a strongly organised government capable of making its will respected. We were forced to realise, what the sweeping democratic theory of the nineteenth century had never admitted, that the sudden introduction of democracy in a community which is not ready for it may lead to anarchy. Thus the misgivings of the old régime in Russia, and the treachery which it contemplated, followed by the whirling chaos and dislocation of the revolution, inflicted grave detriment upon the Grand Alliance, and seriously imperilled the great twin causes of Law and Liberty for which they were fighting.

The champion of autocracy proved to be a very terrible and formidable foe, able to resist with success a world in arms. His superb efficiency in the arts of war, the product of long and tireless preparation, his absolute and centralised control of all the resources of his own State and of his vassals, his central geographical position, his

complete and subtly organised domination of the minds of his subjects, his readiness to stoop to all the arts of deceit and intrigue, his utter unscrupulousness in the employment of every weapon of terror—murder, slavery, torture, outrage—his skill in playing upon the diverse currents of opinion which exist in every free State, all combined to make him terribly strong. But he could also rely upon the assistance of every force hostile to that free co-operation of classes which is the essence of democracy. He could count not only upon ambitious kinglets, court camarillas, corrupt politicians, and all the forces of obscurantism, but also upon those elements in the popular movements of all countries which, inspired by Marx and by his doctrines of violence and class-war, scorn the dream of co-operation for the common weal. He was helped even by the accidents of Fortune : even the Clerk of the Weather seemed to have enlisted on his side. When these lines were written, it could not be said that his utter defeat was assured, even though four-fifths of the world were ranged against him, and all men of good-will prayed for his overthrow. Apollyon is a very dreadful foe, a fierce fighter and a master of gins and snares ; and he who contends with him must have inexhaustible courage and resolution. Under the prolonged stress and anguish of such a conflict, every element of weakness is searched out ; and even men of good-will, if there be in them any strain of irresolution or sentimentalism, are tempted to talk of peace where there can be no peace, and to dally with the idea of a friendly compromise between Right and Wrong. The grim and unrelenting powers that direct the action of the foe show no such weakness ; whatever the price in suffering and destruction, they will not abandon their unchanging aim.

It would be better that we should all go down into ruin together than that there should be any paltering with the Devil : *fiat justitia ruat cœlum* ; and despite all the clamour of the half-hearted that is the temper of the free nations.

The war has terribly tested the fibre of all the nations engaged ; and it has tried in the ordeal of fire the rival systems of government, bringing out mercilessly their defects as well as their virtues. It has shown that self-government is ill adapted for the dreadful business of war, not, indeed, in comparison with autocracy as such, for the self-governing countries have shown far greater efficiency than autocratic Russia, but in comparison with scientific autocracy of the German pattern. And if it be true, as the political philosophers of Germany maintain, that war is the supreme function of the State, a 'biological necessity' for which human societies should make it their first duty to prepare themselves, it must be acknowledged that political freedom is an illusion, an *ignis fatuus*, which wise men will no longer pursue.

On the other hand, the war has shown that among those peoples in whom the habits of self-government are rooted, it produces a wonderful capacity for self-discipline, for endurance, and for the willing subordination of everything to a great idea. That is perhaps the noblest moral of the war. Though they have foregone all the elaborate training in subordination and obedience which Germany has assiduously cultivated, and have paid no attention to the German arts of regimenting and controlling opinion, the self-governing peoples have endured, undismayed, terrors and brutalities such as the Germans have never been called upon to endure, and never will be called upon to endure even should their country be overrun and

conquered by invading armies. Their armies have gone through the agonies of retreat and apparent disaster without losing courage or hope ; and have then turned at bay and beaten back the triumphant enemy. They have had to endure the shock of finding unanticipated engines of war, against which they had no defence prepared, brought into the field against them, and have undergone, month after month, the terrible ordeal of defending frozen or water-logged trenches against heavy odds. They have faced without flinching horrors worse than had ever been experienced or imagined since the world began ; and they have gone to meet these horrors with a fuller and clearer comprehension of their meaning than was ever possible to their predecessors, for this is the first war which has been fought by armies of educated men. Only in one case have these terrors succeeded in awakening the panic they were designed to create ; and this was among the illiterate soldiery of Russia, untrained to the responsibilities of freedom, and suddenly emancipated from the rigid discipline which is autocracy's substitute for these responsibilities. The German soldiery has, it is true, undergone without flinching an equally terrible ordeal in the field. But at least it is plain that self-government does not undermine the capacity for discipline, endurance and sacrifice of the peoples who have enjoyed it. And in this war not only the *moral* of the soldier, but the *moral* of the civilian has been terribly tested in the self-governing lands. Old men and women and children in great cities or quiet country places have watched the dropping of midnight murder from the skies, helpless to defend themselves, yet never allowing their fears to weaken the resolution of their country. Sailors and non-combatant passengers have braved the terrors of the lurking sub-

marine, with its sudden shattering torpedoes, and still continue with quiet valour to go about their business. These are tests of the *moral* of peoples, the like of which no earlier generation has ever had to undergo, and they have been endured practically only by the self-governing peoples, since the methods of random murder and calculated atrocity are happily, as yet, a German monopoly. Perhaps the Germans would show the same courage in endurance ; we shall never know, because they will never be called upon to submit to the brutalities which they have inflicted upon other peoples. But at least we may claim that the rigid discipline of a system of autocracy cannot produce a more sublime valour in endurance than has been shown by the peoples who are free.

And in yet deeper ways the war has demonstrated the moral power that self-governing institutions help to cultivate in the peoples who enjoy them. It was not surprising that the German hosts should be brave and confident when they advanced to seize what they had every reason for believing to be an assured triumph, or when they battled to maintain their hold upon the lands which they had conquered ; this was the culmination towards which all their long discipline had looked. But the proud and modest staunchness of the Belgians, government and people alike offering themselves as a sacrifice to their honour, and enduring with quiet dignity all the sickening brutalities which the conquerors could inflict upon them—what is there in history to surpass this devotion of a free and prosperous people ? Or where shall you match the spectacle of France, as she has shown herself during this war ? A great nation at her ease, taken by surprise in full peace and at a holiday season by the sudden but long-prepared onslaught of a terrible enemy, she saw her armies,

unready and outnumbered, hurled back with terrible losses ; she saw her richest provinces torn from her and left at the mercy of scientific savagery ; she saw the daily trainloads of her wounded sons, whom all her hospitals were insufficient to accommodate ; she heard the awful stories of the gratuitous rapine and desolation wrought by her bestial foe in beautiful old cities and trim countrysides ; yet she set quietly to work, without panic or recrimination, men and women, priests and atheists, nobles and peasants, forgetting all private quarrels, and united in an unwavering resolution to save their homeland and their cherished freedom. Time and again her hopes of victory were broken ; month after month the drain on her lifeblood continued, and the enemy jeered that she was being bled white ; still, without faltering, she kept her face towards the foe, and her proud spirit refused even to think of peace till justice should be done. That is the *moral* of a self-governing people. And what shall be said of Italy, safe out of the tornado, whose people, overriding the natural hesitation of their statesmen, clamoured to be enrolled in the defence of freedom, at a moment when the Grand Alliance was staggering from the effects of the smashing German blows on the Russian front ? And where will be found a parallel in all history for the rising of the British volunteers, five millions of them presenting themselves within a year, men of all classes and types, pouring in from the forge, the field, the club, the office, the class-room, the dosshouse, faster than they could be trained or equipped, and only the more eagerly when they heard the news of defeats and disasters, or of horrors and carnage unimaginable ? Behind the strong shield of the navy their homes and children long seemed safe enough from the outrages which Belgium and France were endur-

ing ; but freedom was imperilled, and there were hideous wrongs to be righted. This also is the *moral* of a self-governing people; it stirs the blood like a trumpet. And to their side came crowding also the self-governing colonists, separated by thousands of miles from the area of conflict, and under no sort of compulsion to take part ; yet they came to share the ghastly perils of their brothers in the defence of freedom, in such numbers that the men from these remote and thinly peopled lands who have voluntarily offered their lives and their careers outnumber the greatest army ever put into the field in the history of warfare, before the dark year of 1914. Assuredly courage, and readiness to sacrifice all for a great cause, willingly and without reward, are qualities gloriously prevalent in the lands that have enjoyed self-government. The warlike virtues are not a monopoly of the State that trains its sons to rejoice in war, and orders its life with a view to war. Nor is it only courage that has been exhibited by the men of the free nations ; they have shown a chivalry towards the weak, and even towards enemy prisoners stained with unnameable iniquities, which equals their courage ; and in this the Germans, brave as they are, have no share. It would, of course, be absurd to attribute these shining qualities wholly to the influence of a system of government or even to the moral conceptions of which it is the expression. But at least it is reassuring to find these qualities so nobly displayed among peace-loving peoples who are masters of their own fate : they show that self-government does not mean self-indulgence, and they rob the advocates of disciplined autocracy of the sole argument they have ever been able to adduce in defence of the moral influence of this system upon its subjects. Self-discipline is manifestly a nobler thing than discipline enforced.

Before the war we might have feared that self-government, while it had all but destroyed the discipline of authority, was failing to replace it with self-discipline. The ordeal of the war has proved the falsity of these fears.

On the other hand, it has displayed in grim relief the hideous moral results of a régime of over-discipline, and of the doctrines of brute power. One of the most impressive aspects of the war has been the evidence it has yielded that all those forces in national life to which we trust to keep the mind of the nation sane, true and upright have been, in Germany, debased and enslaved by the influence of the government. Very early in the war ninety-three of the most distinguished German scholars, philosophers and theologians, men whose lives had been devoted to the pursuit of truth, issued a manifesto in which they endeavoured to refute the plainly established charges made against the German government and army. They produced no evidence ; they confined themselves to mere flat denials of every charge, in defiance of the facts, trusting to the prestige of their reputation. *Es ist nicht wahr !* was the sum and substance of their pronouncement. The manifesto of the ninety-three intellectuals will never be forgotten ; for there is in all history no other such instance of a body of men whose business is the pursuit of truth throwing all canons of evidence to the winds, and slavishly assuming that that is truth which is convenient for their national interests. Nor is it only learning that has been enslaved and blinded. The astounding collection of blasphemies collected by an eminent Danish theologian from German war sermons by Lutheran divines shows that religion and the clergy have equally been bound to the chariot-wheels of Power.

Again, whatever view we may have taken of the

doctrines of German Social Democracy, we have always supposed that it was, at least, independent of government control, and that it was vowed to hostility against the whole system of autocracy and of militarism. The events of the war have shown that the Social Democrats also have been indoctrinated with the conceptions which inspire the German government and with which it has poisoned the nation's mind. We have seen them, in many ways and in many countries, acting as informal agents on behalf of their government; intriguing in neutral countries; playing upon the shallow sentimentalism of International Socialists in belligerent countries; labouring to reduce Russia to chaos; buying up newspapers in Rumania to turn them into German organs; trying to cast the veil of liberal sentiments over the nakedness of military autocracy. A single episode may suffice to show how fully the Socialists are, in essential things, the minions of autocracy. In September 1914, after the occupation of Brussels by the German army, four German Socialists, three of whom were members of the Reichstag while the fourth was editor of a Socialist newspaper, visited the Socialists of Brussels to persuade them to accept the situation submissively. The Belgians complained of the violation of Belgian neutrality. Here is the reply of Dr. Koster, editor of the *Hamburger Echo*, on behalf of his colleagues. 'It is all your fault. You ought to have let us pass; you would have been handsomely compensated by our government. . . . Moreover, everybody has known for years past that in the event of a war between France and Germany, our troops would advance through Belgium.' The Belgians asked whether no weight should be given to national honour, international treaties, and the rights of free peoples. 'National

honour!' replied Dr. Koster. 'That is mere middle-class idealism, with which Socialists have nothing to do. As for international treaties, they don't hold in case of war. Does not historical materialism (the doctrine of Marx) teach us that the development of the proletariat is intimately bound up with the economic prosperity of the nation? It follows that the German Socialists ought to support the government.' The Belgians answered that, for them, honour ranked above material interests, and that they adopted the motto of the old free towns of Flanders, 'Better to die of one's own free will than to lose one's country's freedom.' Dr. Koster, we are told, found this assertion so extraordinary that he called his colleagues to hear it repeated; whereupon one of the Belgians said bitterly that the only thing they seemed to possess in common was a stomach; but on the Belgian side there was a heart as well, which seemed to be replaced on the German side by a point of interrogation. This dialogue,[1] between free men and materialised serfs, deserves to be placed beside Thucydides' immortal Melian dialogue. What especially ought to be noted is that one of the German delegates was Karl Liebknecht.

These facts go to show that autocracy, in its German form, has succeeded in destroying the sense of truth and honour of the greater part of its subjects, even of those among them who profess to be opposed to its principles. But that is not the worst of the moral *débâcle* which this system, and the immoral ideals that inspire it, have brought about in a great nation. The atrocities which have been deliberately ordered by the German high

[1] Reported by the Belgians who took part in the interview, and printed in *L'Humanité*, 20th January 1916.

command are without parallel in the history of civilised warfare. But they are in accord with the principles which govern the German State. What makes them doubly horrible is that they have been willingly carried out by the mass of German manhood in the army and the navy, and even deliberately accentuated by ingenious refinements of cruelty, such as those which accompanied the murder of the crew of the *Belgian Prince*. It may very confidently be asserted that there is no other civilised nation whose government can be imagined ordaining such atrocities, or whose soldiers could be compelled to practise them ; and assuredly there is no self-governing land in which, if such things were done, the voice of protest and of shame would not be heard. For all time it will be recorded against Germany, not merely that she violated her honour by invading Belgium, that her authorities decreed wholesale slaughters of harmless non-combatants on land and sea, that she shamelessly discarded all the rules and usages of civilised warfare : these things, indeed, will never be forgotten ; but perhaps the most indelible stigma, never to be wiped out by all the lapse of time, will be the simple fact that public rejoicings were organised, and holidays granted to school-children, to celebrate the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the cold-blooded murder of eleven hundred unarmed civilians, including many women and children. This was a revelation of national *moral* which for sheer hideousness can never possibly be exceeded ; it seems to open a window into hell, and show us a carnival of fiends. This appalling revival of ape-like delight in mere destruction, this savage exultation in the power to inflict pain, among a people long known for their kindliness, can be attributed to no other cause than the influence of a system of government

and social organisation, and to the deliberate cultivation and inculcation of the worship of brute force, the deliberate assertion that all moral obligations may be disregarded if they seem to stand in the way of power.

Because the Prussian creed defied and repudiated the enlarging conceptions of justice to which modern civilisation has given birth, it has been forced to go further yet, and to repudiate the simplest principles of honour, decency and humanity upon which civilisation rests; and it is not only in defence of the most enlightened political ideas of the modern world, but in defence of the most rudimentary principles of morality, that the free peoples find themselves called upon to fight. The subjects of this incomparably efficient and scientific government, having been blinded by materialism to the things that make humanity worthy of respect, find themselves at issue with the moral judgment of the whole world, and cannot understand why; they find themselves regarded, not by their enemies only, with a mixture of wonder, fear, and loathing for which even the most unqualified victory would be but a poor compensation. For they have proved, with a fullness hitherto unexemplified in history, that it is possible for a nation, as for a man, to lose its soul in the hope of gaining the whole world. It would be a bad bargain even if the price were paid in full. But what if it is not paid!

Self-government has not yet won its victory. Even if it emerges successfully from the ordeal of war, there lies before it a still more terrible ordeal in the coming labours of reconstruction, which will assuredly lead to grave troubles and much bitterness of feeling. The systems of self-government, as we have hitherto known them, may not stand the strain of the immensely increased responsi-

bilities which will necessarily fall upon the State ; and if the anticipation of future war is added to the strain, we may well witness a temporary collapse of the system in some, perhaps in all, of the States wherein it has been painfully established. But whatever troubles we may see, the ideal of self-government can never again fail to command the assent of all good men. For the rival ideal, in spite of its material efficiency, has revealed itself as morally bankrupt, the foe of all that is noblest in man. This service, at least, the German crime has rendered : it has identified the idea of self-government with the ideas of justice and of humanity. A century ago, or even fifty years ago, when self-government was as yet untried in any but a few States, it was still possible to assert, as the eighteenth-century philosophers had asserted, that enlightened despotism might best assure the moral advancement of men. That view has been for ever destroyed by the action and the effects of the most intelligent and enlightened autocracy which the world has ever seen. And though we have learnt to be humble about democracy, though we have realised that it needs long training before it can work well, and though we know well the mistakes, stupidities and crudities of which it may be guilty, we have learnt also that it is safer and wiser, in the complex affairs of our modern world, to trust to the guidance of the Spirit that broods over the shifting and conflicting thoughts of free men, than to leave our fortunes to the guidance of any single dominating tradition or of any knot of irresponsible rulers. Even should victory attend the army of Germany in this war, the cause of autocracy is a lost cause, because it can never survive the blows which Germany itself has struck at it.

INDEX

Abdul Hamid, overthrow of, 252 ; character, 253.
Act of Settlement (1700), 25, 26, 27.
Agrarian revolution period, 63.
Agriculture, political importance of, destroyed, 64.
Alexander I. (Russia), 53.
Alexander II. (Russia), 194.
Alexander, King (Serbia), 241 ; policy of, 242 ; murder of, 230, 242.
Alsace-Lorraine, Germany's attitude towards, 182.
America, North, revolution in, effect of, on self-government, 34 ; French aid in, 48. *See also* United States of America *and* South America.
Anarchism, German, 112; Russian, 246; Bakunin Association (1868), 112.
Anarchy, in Russia (1905), 248.
Anti-Combination Acts (1799), (1800), 64 ; repeal of (1825), 67.
Anti-Corn Law agitation, 167.
Arabia, 254.
Aragon, Cortes of, 12.
Aristocracy, reason for supremacy of, 24 ; in mid-Victorian period, 71. *See also* Gentry, landed, *and* Land.
Aristotle, on small governments, 7 ; on civic disunity, fatal to self-government, 8 ; on the middle class, 75.
Armenia, 254.
Army, control of, important factor in the State, Delbrück *cit.*, 26 ; power of, deliberately fostered in pre-war Europe, 231 ; Europe *v.* Germany on question of (1914-1918), 235 ; English, early system, 17, first state control of, 25 ; German power of, in politics, 91, 92 ; Landtag's resistance to increase in, 123-4. *See also* Militarism.
Army Acts, German, socialist support of, 238 ; prelude to war 234.
Athens, democracy in, 8.
'August Union' of European Powers, 66, 69.
Ausgleich, Austrian (1867), 116, 139.
Austria-Hungary, annexation of Bosnia, 231, 242, German cause of, 235 ; constitution of, modern history and development, 122, 132-42, (1860) futile reform, 132, (1867) *Ausgleich*, 116, 134, 139, 243, (1883), (1896) 243, (1906) 137, (1907) 243 ; German influence in, 138, 139, 141, 232 ; war with Germany, 113 ; Bismarck's instigation, 125, Italian relations with, 83, 84, war with (1859), 113 ; national spirit poor in, 9, crushing of, 109 ; provincial estates in, 13 ; revolutionary movements, 78, 94 ; socialism in, 78, effect of French revolution, transitory, 80-3 ; Serbia, pre-war control of, by, 241-2 ; and Great War, pre-war decade of unrest, 243.
Autocracy, theory of, favourable to militarist governments, 172 ; dependence of, on armaments, 234 ; twentieth-century estimation of, 276 ; effect of, on national *moral*, 294 ; in Great War, moral defeat and moment-

ous issue of, 281-3, 297 ; German aim, 225, apparent success, 228, ultimate result, 193, challenge to world, 284, 285-7 ; Russian, work of Zemstva, crippled by, 193, 284.
Autonomy, municipal, in mediæval England, 20.

Bagehot, William, on British government (1868), 35 ; on increased franchise, 152 ; criticism of *English Constitution*, 153-7 ; mistaken view of future of self-government, 168.
Bakunin, Michael, 112.
Balkans, constitutional changes in the (1843-1878), 117, 119, 122 ; wars (1912) and (1913), 231 ; League, German ruin of, 234.
Bank of England, growth of commercial power shown by, 24.
Bavaria, under the Empire (1871), 130, 132.
Beaconsfield. *See* Disraeli.
Bebel, Ferdinand, social democrat party led by, 112 ; on militarism, *cit.*, 239.
Beesley, Professor, 104.
Belgian Prince, murdered crew of, political significance of, 294.
Belgium, French revolutionary influence on, liberal movements, 48, 69, failure of, 70 ; German war atrocities in, 178 ; self-government in, modern, 122 ; socialism in, German intrigues (1914), 293 ; war, the, moral effect of, in, 289-90.
Bentham, Jeremy, 71.
Bern, early socialism in, 78.
v. Bismarck, Graf Otto, career, 125-32 ; character and hold of, on German public, 163 ; despotic rule of, imperial executive, supreme, over party majorities, 132, 273-4 ; estimation of, in future, 82 ; aliens, policy toward, 182 ; Austrian policy of, 125 ; industrial encouragement, 185 ; insurance, State, scheme for, 183 ; nationalism of, 110 ; press censorship, 191, 192 ; Roman Church, conflict with, 178 ; socialism, 179, fear of, 180, in State, aim of, 183.
Blanc, Louis, socialist doctrine of, 99 ; on capitalism, 103.
Bohemia, political status of, 137.
Bolingbroke, Lord (1678-1751), party government system attacked, 28.
Boroughs, mediæval, trade in, 14.
Bosnia, annexation of (1908), 140, 230, 235, 242.
Boulanger, General, 198.
Breslau university, tyranny in, 187.
Briand, 202.
Bright, John, electorate appeal, 167.
Britain, Chartist movement, 78, constitution of, 62, after (1848) revolution, 83, 93, modern Parliamentary procedure, 122, 147-9, after Reform Act (1867), 151-68, 205-26 ; colonisation from, 36-7 ; educational reform (1902), 263 ; franchise, extension of (1867), 1, 116, 169 ; French Revolution, effect of, in, 48 ; House of Lords, twentieth-century powers of, 266 ; labour, interests of, safeguarded, 64 ; formation of Labour Party, 263 ; liberal revolution (1830) and middle class control, result of, 57, 71-7, 80 ; party system of government, 157-66, discontent with, 61, 63-5, twentieth-century criticism, 222, 256 ; prosperity of, in mid-nineteenth century, 72, 73, 159 ; Reform Act (1867), 116, (1884), 207 ; self-government of, 9, 18-33, 51, 53, involuntary growth, 11-12, 34, original aims, 226, period of struggle from (1830), 69-77, capitalists in favour of, 94, nineteenth-century development, 59, 60, twentieth century, 263, foreign estimation of, after Conference of Verona, 67, American misconception of, 40, 41, 42 ; socialism in, 176, 206, anti-nationalistic attitude, 238 ; war methods, volun-

teer system, 290. *See also* England.
Brussels, early socialism in, 78.
Bulgaria, reformed constitution of (1878), 118.
v. Bulow, Prinz, on idealism in politics, 45.
Bundesrat (1871 onwards), status of, in German constitution, 128-9.
Bureaucracy, modern methods and development of, 18, 121; Austrian, 133, 138, 139; British, growth of, mid-Victorian, 155-7, twentieth century, 219, 270; French, pre-revolution, 50, under Louis Philippe, 74, after Napoleon I., 65, under Napoleon III., 85, modern efficiency and control of, 148-9; German, 62, 87, 88, 122, power of (1850), 89, power of, under Bismarck, 123-32, education controlled by, 188, final system of, 172-92; Russian, exposuro of, by Japanese war, 246, revival after first Duma, 249, German nature and influence of, 251, power of, in autocratic government, 193.
Burke, Edmund, on self-government as British heritage, 34.

Cabet, Etienne, 99.
Cabinet, control, institution of, 27; position of, in British politics (Bagehot), 155.
Canada, self-government instituted in, 72.
Canning, George, on powers' tyrannical settlement after Napoleon, *cit.*, 67; on self government, 69; on political value of American republics, *cit.*, 69.
Capital, Marx's war against, 101; future of, 104; socialist's conception of, 172, 174.
Capital (*Das Kapital*), 100.
Capitalism, Marx's conception of evil of, 103, 104; socialist theory of, 236; history of, 237; industrial, growing importance of, 64; power of, politically exaggerated, 259; *v.* social welfare, 265.
Carinthia, political status of, 137.
Carlyle, Thomas, 97.
Carnot, Pres., 201.
Castile, Cortes of, 12.
Cavour, Count C. di, 84.
Charles v. (Spain), 12.
Charles x. (France), absolutism upheld by, 73.
Chartist movement, liberty of, 78; against individualism, 98.
Chauvinism, 55.
China, self-government, in first steps, 1, 61.
Christian socialism, growth of, 97.
Church, the Roman, mediæval political power of, 11; loss of political power, 15; under Napoleon III., 86; as political factor, French rejection of, 262; Protestant, as political factor, overthrow of, threatened in England, 265. *See also* Religion.
Civilisation, western, and self-government, 2; European, modern world domination of, 241.
Civil service, competitive examination for, institution of, 156, 161.
Class distinctions, mediæval, 13-16; privileges abolished by National Assembly, 50; abolished by Napoleon, 52; after English Agrarian Revolution, 64.
Class, middle, after 1830, rule of, confirmed in England, France, and Belgium, 69-77; loss of power (1832-1867), 76; Dutch franchise, 84; growth of, result of political changes, 59, 96; industrial control of, 111.
Class-war, Marx's creed, incitement to, 101, 112, 105, 236; encouraged by Germany, 112; and by war-party (1914-1917), 286; inevitable in social progress, 102-3; effect of great financial combines on, 174; distrust of government, fostered by, 259; social welfare *v.* military expenditure, 265.
Class, working. *See* Labour.

Cobden, Richard, on industrial wealth and peace, 186.
Colonial Office, mid-Victorian, power of officials of, 156.
Colonies, British, self-government in, 23, 72.
Colonisation, factor in incitements of Great War, 232.
Commerce. *See* Trade.
'Communist Manifesto,' 100; mob's demands, 145; Union (1847), 100.
Confederation, German (1815), form of government of (1848), overthrown and restored, 81; Diet, on self-government, 67, 68.
Co-operation, growth of, as political factor, 56; theory of, Owen's scheme, 98; Marx's doctrine fundamentally opposed to, 101, 104.
Co-operative societies, step toward self-government, 80.
Corruption, political, 28.
Cortes, the Estates, in Spain, 12.
Coup d'État (1851), 142, 146.
Crime, in Germany, pre-war violence, 275-6; Great War bestiality, 276; juvenile, pre-war increase, 276.
Croats, the, racial difficulties in Austria, 135, 140, 244; Magyar tyranny over, 136, 244.
Cronstadt, street fighting (1917), *footnote* 145.
Czechs, the, representation of, in Reichsrat, 137; hostilities of, to Austrian government and German influence, 244.

Das Kapital, 100.
v. Delbrück, M. F. R., on army control, *cit.*, 24; on military government, *cit.*, 92 *ff.*
Democracy as political ideal, nineteenth-century growth of, 54-62, 67-8, 70; civic, in small states, 8; financial combines, deterrent to, 174; Marx inconsistent to, 101; party system help to, 164; revolutionary effects of, 57; socialist attitude towards, 237; war difficulties of, 172, 257; world order of, as momentous issue of Great War, 240, 280; American, 48; French, 46, 50, 51, 80; German followers false to, 293; Russian, 246; Serbian, 242; Swiss, 7, 18.
Denmark, reformed constitution (1849), 84; parliamentary system established (1864), 113; parliament of (1866), 115; return to Prussian system (1863), 93; German relations with, 182; Norway withdrawn from government of, 66.
Derby, Earl of (fourteenth), hold of, on British mid-Victorian public, 163.
Despotism, modern growth of, 18, 29; socialist aims, possible form of, 105-6; Austrian, 133; English, Tudor times, 19; German, 86-93, 123-32, 229, pre-war discontent with, 273-4; Russian, 247; Turkish, 253, 254.
Diet of German Confederation, power of, representation refused by, 67, 68.
Disraeli, Benjamin, hold of, on British public, 163.
Dissolution, power of, importance of, to government, 41.
Divine right of kings, Prussian adherence to, 187.
Division of power, executive and Parliament, fallacy of, 26, 28, 85, 155.
Don Pacifico, and Palmerston, 153.
Dreyfus affair, 198, 199, 200.
Duma, institution of, 1, 248; futility of (1917), 283-4.

East India Company, and growth of merchants' power, 24.
Edward I. (England), 13.
Education, as political factor, 37; in political methods, necessary, 7; compulsory, 165; American, 37; British system, 37, 165; French system, 166; German system, 166; Acts (1870), 165; (1875), 165.
Egypt, government of, twentieth-century discontent, 61; self-

government in, desired, 2, 254-6; German influence in, pro-war, 234.
Elector, the Great, Friedrich Wilhelm of Brandenburg, 13.
Election (1784), self-government, 25.
Elizabeth, Queen, self-governmont, 19.
Employers' Liability Act, 208.
England, army system, early, 17; colonisation from, seventeenth-century self-government, 22; despotism in, Tudor, 19; insular position, advantageous, in early times, 16; Justices of the Peace, power of, in early times, 16; Parliament, development of, self-government, 13-15, 18-33. *See also* Britain.
English Constitution (Bagehot), 153-7.
Engineers, Amalgamated Society of (1851), 106.
Enver, Bey, power of, in Young Turk movement, 253.
Estates, the, constitution of, 11-15.
Europe, governments on British model in, 59, 111-12; revolutionary periods in, 58-61; self-government in, Powers' agreement to (1815), 66, Powers' repudiation of, 67, 68, 69; world domination of political ideas and civilisation of, 175, 254, 279.

Factory Act (1834), 96.
Ferdinand VII. (Spain), self-government abolished by, 66.
Feudalism, main factors in, 11.
'Finance, High,' modern development of, 173, 174; dangers of, 174.
Finland, German influence in, pre-war, 234.
Flanders, mediæval, self-government in, 6.
Fourier, François M. C., socialist scheme of, 99.
France, constitution of, 45, 61, 63, 65, 73, 81, 256, (1791) 52, (1822) 67, (1830) 73, (1848) 85-6, 93, 146, (1860) Napoleon III.'s changes, 143, (1870) rule during war, 143, (1871) Third Republic, 113, 117, 144-50, 198-205; bureaucracy, 65; colonisation system of, early, 22; Communist revolution, 100, 145; Empire, second, reactionary rule, 81, 113; democracy, spirit of, in, 73; Franco-Prussian War, 113, 143; Germany's attitude towards pre-war, 234, 236, military menace, 171, Alsace-Lorraine, 182, inciting friction with England, 235; industrial unrest in twentieth century, 259-61; middle-class power, 81; modern discontent with government, 61, 63, 65, 256; revolution in, spirit of, 69, 73, 100, 145; Revolution, The (1789), self-government after, 34, 35, influence of, on foreign countries, 52; (1848), 80, 100, *footnote* 145, Blanc's contribution to, 99, (1871), *footnote* 145; self-government in, development of, 45-150, 176; Third Republic onwards, 117, 120, 122, 141-50, 198, 205; socialism, 176, 201, 261, pre-war German intrigue, 236; States-general, 12; universal suffrage (1848), 85-6, 93.
Franchise, extension of, 1, 11-17, 26-19, (1884) 169; Prussian (1906), 245. *See also* Suffrage.
Franco-Austrian War (1859), 113, 123, 125-7.
—— Prussian War (1871), 113; effect of, on France, 117, 141; 143.
Frankfort (1848), National Assembly at, demand for self-government, 81; (1866), incorporation of, with Prussia, 127.
Freemen, Assemblies of, 21.
Free Trade, adoption of, 71.
Friedrich II., the Great (Prussia), absolute government of, *cit.*, 30, 31; Stato welfare policy of, 182.
—— Wilhelm I. (Prussia), policy of, 87.

Friedrich Wilhelm III. (Prussia), promise of self-government, 52 ; not fulfilled by, 66, 89.
—— Wilhelm IV. (Prussia), history of representative government under, 89.
Friendly societies, step towards self-government, 79.

Galicia, autonomy in, 137, 242.
Gambetta, *cit.*, on religion, 199.
Geneva, democracy, early, 7.
Gentry, landed, power of, early nineteenth century, 21 ; seventeenth century, 23, 29.
George III. (England), party government attacked by, 28.
Gorard, James W., Kaiser's view of international law, 279.
Germany, anarchism in, 112 ; in Austria, influence of, 116, 137, 138, 141, 235, war with, 113, 123, 125 ; autocracy, complete, twentieth-century intrigues, 177-93, 195, 224, 272 ; Bismarck's rule, period of, 125-32 ; brutality of character, and in war, 287-9, 294, intellectuals' disclaimer of (1915), 292 ; Bundesrat (1871), 128 ; bureaucracy, 59, 60, 62, 122-32, temporarily overthrown (1848), 81-3 ; constitution of, modern, 59, 60, 120, 122, 123-32, 176 ; crime in, pre-war statistics, 275 ; education in, 189, state tyranny over, 186-90 ; empire formed (1871), 59, 110, 116, 125-32, political effect of, 109 ; Franco-Prussian War, 143 ; French Revolution, temporary effect of, 52, 80, 81 ; Hanover and Hesse annexed, 127 ; industrial development, 176, Bismarck's policy, 185 ; Landtag (1850), 123 ; liboral movements, failure of (1830), 69, (1848) 82, (1866) 123, 124, pre-war discontent at despotic rule, 274 ; literature of, influence of state control on intellectual development, 190-2, 292 ; Marx's influence in, 112 ; mediæval government in, 6, 18 ; militarism in, 170-2, 190, resistance of, 124 ; nationalism in, 110 ; in Poland, policy of (1863), 126 ; press control in, by State, 190 ; Reichstag (1871), 128 ; religion in, Lutheran, state-controlled, 178, Romanism, power of, 178, Bismarck's conflict with, 178-9 ; in Russia, pre-war preparations, 251 ; Schleswig and Holstein, annexation of, 126 ; secret service of, pre-war, 233 ; self-government in, futility of, 29, 66, 111 ; in Serbia, influence of, 241, 242 ; socialism in, 176, 236 ; useless majority, 237-40 ; twentieth-century demands, 273-6 ; social democrats of, 113 ; false to ideals, in war (1914), 293 ; social organisation in, 182-3 ; in Turkey, 251 ; war preparations, 234, 257 ; incitements to Great War, deliberate, 234 ; Great War premonitions, repudiation of world's civilisation and ideals, 279-84, moral defeat of, in, 297. *See also* Prussia *and* Prussianism.
Gild system, self-government, promoted by, 21.
Gladstone, William Ewart, electorate recognised as political factor by, 167-8 ; hold of, on British public, 163.
Government. *See* Local Government *and* Self-Government.
Gotha conference (1875), 179.
Great War. *See under* War.
Greece, ancient, self-government in, 6 ; absoluto monarchy in (1843), 93 ; self-government in (1863), 117 ; Constantine's fear of self-government, 283 ; revolution, against Persia, 229, (1909), 231 ; Great War, treachery of, 283.
Grotius, Hugo, equality of man, 46.
Guizot, F. P. G., government under, perfection of, 76.

Hague Conference (1899), German attitude at, 171, (1907), 235

Hanover, Prussian annexation of, 127.
Hapsburg dynasty, absolutism of, in Austrian constitution, 135, 140, 141.
Hare, Thomas, proportional representation, 154.
Henry VIII. (England), form of self-government under, 19.
Hesse, Prussian annexation of, 127.
History, Marx's conception of, 102.
Hohenzollern monarchy, oarly greatness of, 13 ; despotism of, 88-92 ; consolidation of despotic empire under, 123-32.
Holland, self-government, early times, 23, modern, 122 ; colonisation system, early, 22 ; constitution, 63, 169, reform of (1848), 83, 93 ; Belgium, control of, lost to, 70 ; franchise, extension of, 169.
Home Office, mid-Victorian power of officials in, 156.
—— Rule Bill, political unrest fostered by, 213, 265.
House of Commons, constitution of, seventeenth century, 23, democracy in, spread of doctrines of, 57 ; financial control in, 265 ; majority, neccssity for cabinet, 27 ; national representation in, limited, 267-70 ; party systom, control of, 157-66, loss of, 214.
—— of Lords, seventeenth-century constitution of, 23 ; position of clergy in, 15 ; dissatisfaction with, 209, 266 ; reform, difficulties of, 267-70.
Hungary, lack of political liberty in, 6 ; constitution of, 17, reform in (1867), 116 ; national spirit wanting, 9 ; Magyar tyranny over, pre-war, 244 ; race difficulties in (1867), 136. *See also* Austria-Hungary.
Hyde Park railings incident, 151.

Imperialism, European, rapid growth and rivalry of, 175.
Income tax, U.S.A. struggles for, 39.
Independent Labour Party, English, aims of, 238.
India, German influence in, pre-war, 234 ; self-government in, demand for, 2, 254-6 ; modern desire for, 61, aim of, in future, 72 ; slight concession towards, 265.
Individualism, theory of, 95-6 ; Marx's substitution for, failure, 105-6 ; *v.* socialism, 97.
Industrialism, growth of, 56-7, 60, continental, 111 ; liberty politically co-incident with, 94 ; modern methods of, 173 ; middle class power caused by, 70 ; public welfare movements in, 262 ; self-government in, 174 ; as State policy in Germany, 183-5 ; trade unions, continental, inexperienced, 233 ; pre-war unrest, 231.
Insurance, sickness, 264 ; Bismarck's policy, 183 ; unemployment, 264.
International law, 2 ; violation of, German, 280, 295.
—— Workmen's Association (1864), 112.
Ireland, Home Rule Bill, 213, 266 ; German influence in, 233, 272 ; revolution in, 272.
Italy, constitution of, mediæval, 6, 18 ; modern criticism, 256 ; Franco-Austrian war (1859), 123 ; French Revolution, effect of, in, 48, 80, 81-3 ; liberal movements (1830), 69 ; revolution in, 94 ; self-government in, 111, 122 ; mediæval, 6, fear of, by Anti-Ally party in Great War, 283 ; Turkish War (1910), 231 ; union in, political effect of, 59, 109, 110 ; War, Great, issue of, stand for liberty, 283, 290.

Japan, self-governmont in, 1, European type of, 169-70.
Jaurès, Jean, pacifism of, 238.
Jew, the, as political factor, 100 ; Russian, 248.

Joseph II. (Germany), government by, 30-1.
'Junkers,' the, position of, in Prussia, 87, 125-32.
Justices of the Peace, mediæval, English voluntary self-government, 16, 20, 21; modern, 207.

Kaiser, the, power of, in Germany, 128-9. *See also under individual names.*
Karageorgevitch family, in Serbia, 242.
Kartel, Germany's commercial encouragement, 184.
Kingsley, Charles, on labour's interests, 97.
Kostor, Herr Dr., denunciation of Belgian socialists, *cit.*, 293, 294.
Kulturkampf, the, 178.

Labour Exchanges, institution of, 264.
—— Party, growth of, 56, 59, 64; after repeal of Anti-Combination Acts, 67; artisan movement, 79; Blanc's theory of social reform, 99; danger in, 257; future of, 104; Independent, 238; Marx's doctrine, 102-3, 108; parliamentary recognition of (1906), 263; suffrage extension (1867), 116; trade unions, 106.
Lamartine, Alphonse, policy of, 85.
Land, decrease of small proprietors, 24; yeoman holders, decline of, 63.
Landowners, former supremacy of, 21, 23, 24, 29; local government control of, 64.
'Landowning oligarchy' period, 24.
Landtag (1850) in German constitution, futility of, 123-8.
Lassalle, Ferdinand, 112; on civilisation, *cit.*, 239.
Law, rule by, in civilisation, 255; political relationship to, 258; Roman perfection of, 20; in Russia (1917), danger of, 285; in Tudor times, 20. *See also* Rational law.
League of Nations, 278.
Lecky, W. E. H., on post-Napoleonic government perfection, 75, 76.
Lenin, Vladimir Yulianov, German influence on, 252.
Leo XIII., Pope, 200.
Leopold II. (Tuscany), political ideal of, 30-1.
Liberalism, British, 209; and nationalism, 55; French, persistent demand (1860-70), 143; German, defeat of, by Bismarck, 127. *See also* Self-Government, Parliament, *and* Liberty.
Liberty, dogmas of, 34-53; industrial development and, 56; mob law mistaken for, 285; revolutionary spirit incited by, 33; self-government ideal, 5, 282; war, effect of, 5; American aims, 44, 36; British, mid-Victorian, 48, 153; French, effect of Revolution on, 46, 52, 54; lost under Napoleon III., 142; German want of, 186-7, 190-2; Grecian, overthrow of Persia, 229; in India, high degree of, 6; Russian demand for (1904), 246.
Liebknecht, Karl, apostasy of (1914), 294.
Lincoln, Abraham, on democratic government, *cit.*, 47.
Local Government system, development of, 166-7, 207, 208; extension, eighteenth century, 25.
—— —— Board Act (1871), 167.
London, early socialism in, exiles foster, 68, 78.
Louis XIV. (France), method of rule of, 29-30.
Louis XV. (France), government under, 29.
—— Philippe (King of the French), freedom of thought under, 73, 74.
Lutheran Church, German State control of, 178.

Macchiavelli, Niccolo, policy of, and modern Prussianism, 187.

Macedonia, 231.
Macmahon, Pres., 198.
Magna Carta, basis of American liberty, 39.
Magyars, the, tyrannical majority of, in Hungary, 116, 135, 244.
Majority, parliamentary system of, 27.
Malthus, Thomas R., 71.
'Manchesterism,' age of, 94.
Marx, Karl, career, 100, 180, 181; character and reputation of, 101.
Marx, theories of, British non-acceptance of, 107, 153; European countries influenced by, 60, 112; International Workmen's Association, inaugural address, 112; labour's conception of middle-class control, 112; revival of followers of, from 1889, 172; revolutionary incitement of, 233; in Russia, 245; self-government hindered by teaching of, 105; universal extension of teaching of, 99-107, 176; contortion of, to support war, 294, peace aims annulled by, 236.
Maurice, Frederick, on labour's interests, 97.
Mazzini, Giuseppe, democratic nationalism of, 55; in Britain, 153.
Merchants, autonomous, in feudal times, 1; foreign, growth of power of, seventeenth century, 23, 29.
Mercier, Cardinal, 179.
Meetings, public, value of, as factor in politics, 167-8.
Mesopotamia, 254.
Metternich, Prinz, reactionary government overthrown, 81.
Mikado, The, impaired absolutism of, 169, 170.
Milan, King (Serbia), 241.
Militarism, effect of, on national *moral*, 193, 295; insidious growth of, in European peace periods, 170-3; Austrian (after 1860), 133, 139; French Napoleonic, 49, 51; German slavery to, 190, final ascendancy of (1871), 130-1, preparations for war, 257.
Mill, John Stuart, 71; on democratic franchise, 152; criticism of *Representative Government*, 153-7; on self-government, 168; uneducated power feared by, 258.
Millerand, M., 202.
Mob, law, 100; French Commune (1871), 145; action of, Hyde Park railing incident (1867), 151; Russian spirit of (1905), 247, (1917), *footnote* 145.
Moldavia, representative council (1856), 117.
Monarchy, absolute, mediæval, 18; as philosopher's ideal government, 29-30; modern, with local self-government, 21.
Monroe Doctrine (1823), institution of, 69.
Montesquieu, C., Baron De, on English government, 26; division of power, doctrine, 85; influence of political views of, in America, 40, 42.
Morocco, rising in, 231, 234.
Müller, Herr, socialist and German war-agent (1914), 238.
Municipal Reform Act (1855), 71.
Mutiny Act (1689), scope of, 25.

Naples, Liberal revolution in, 68.
Napoleon I., autocracy of, 6, 7.
Napoleon III., autocracy of, 7, 141-3; despotism of, 83-5, 93, 99.
National Assembly, Paris, 17; class privileges abolished by, 50.
Nationalism as political aim, era of, European, 54, 77, 108-68; constitutional stability result of, 109; factor in Great War, 2, 279.
Nationality, loyal spirit of, socialist repudiation of, 232; self-government, desire for, result, 9, 113; in Austria, Balkans, Hungary, 2, 31, 232; Egypt, 255; India, 255.
Navy, German, growth of, 234.

Netherlands, the, States-general in, 21.
Nicholas II. (Russia), revolutionary demands, treatment of, 247-8.
Nietzsche, Friedrich W., anti-Christian German followers, 177; predisposition to war in philosophy of, 177, 275.
Nihilism, movement of, formation, 78.
North German Confederation (1871), 116.
Norway, constitution of, 63 ; controlled resemblance of democracy in, 93 ; democratic demands, in, 57, 63, 65, 66; Danish power in, 122 ; parliament in, relations with Sweden, 115, 231.

O'Connell, Daniel, 160.
Old Age Pensions Act, 208, 264.
'Organisation de Travail,' 99.
Orleans monarchy, in France, 73.
Otho, King, Greece, 93.
Owen, Robert, practical socialism of, 98, 99.

Pacifism, pre-war movement, 236; war aims, mistaken by adherents of, 278.
Palmerston, Lord, and Don Pacifico, 153 ; complete hold over British public, 163.
Paris, socialism in, exiles foster, 68, 78 ; revolutionary fighting in, 70, 80, 145.
—— Commune (1871), 145.
—— Council of (1856), 117.
Parliament, government by, development of, 13-15, 23 ; executive under control of, 26, 122, 141-68 ; minority, in some countries, in control of, 122, 132-41 ; political training necessary, 245, 247, 248 ; twentieth-century criticism, 61, 212, 256-72, 277 ; socialism, cause of difficulties in, 176 ; variation in Upper and Lower Chambers, 119 ; war, cause of difficulties in, 172. *See also* Self-Government.
Parliament Act (1911), 266.
Parnell, Charles, 213.
Party politics, 26-8 ; British system, 157-66 ; American, 43 ; French, 74.
Patriot King (Bolingbroke), 28.
Paulsen, Friedrich, on evils of German pre-war despotism, *cit.*, 275.
Pays d'état, French provincial government, 13.
Peace, self-government a factor in, 4 ; 'armed,' in nineteenth century, 170, 173 ; Cobden's ideal, failure, 186 ; Kaiser as exponent of, 239 ; socialist aim, 236-9.
—— Congress (1899), 171, (1907), 235.
Peel, Sir Robert, government by, perfection of, 76 ; party break from Tories, 158.
Pension, Old Age, Act, 268, 264.
Persia, despotism in, 229 ; self-government attempted in, 1, 61.
Philip II. (Spain), 12.
Philosophy, in French politics, 49.
Piedmont, liberal revolution in, 68.
Pitt, William, 28.
Plehve, murder of, 246.
Poland, partition (1772), 30 ; liberal movements (1830), 69 ; parliamentary system of Alexander I., 66, modern, 63 ; Austrian intrigues in, 243 ; Galicia, Austrian, Poles in, 137 ; Germany's attitude towards, 182 ; Bismarck's policy (1863), 126 ; Russia's treatment of, 182.
Politics, education necessity for career of, 7, 118, 119, 122, 247, 249, 254-6 ; transformation of, in nineteenth century, 54-62 ; America's isolation, 38, 45 ; industrial rivalry, 60 ; platform important, 217 ; pre-war intrigues and difficulties, 231.
Poor Law Amendment Act (1834), 71.
—— —— Board, mid Victorian power of, 156.
—— Rate, in early times, 21.
Portugal, colonisation, early, 22 ; parliament of, executive controlled by, 93.

Posen, Germany's attitude, 182.
Possibilistes, Les, 201.
Power, doctrine of, 282 ; triumph in Germany (1914-1917), 286 ; disaster, effect of, on, 5.
Press, the, ownership of, as power, 258 ; distrust of government fostered by, 259.
Press, Freedom of the, political reform, 119, 217 ; Austrian, refusal of, 68 ; British, 65, 67, 96, 153 ; French, 65, partial, under Louis Philippe, 73 ; controlled by Napoleon III., 142 ; German, refusal of, 68, 125, 190-2.
'Proletarian,' Marx's definition of, 101.
Proudhon, Joseph, 99.
Prussia, constitution of, 86, (1850) futility of, 89-93, 125, 130, (1867), 128 ; Austria defeated by (1866), 113 ; Denmark defeated by, 115 ; monarchy of, aims and confirmed power of, 123, 130, 184, 225 ; nationalism of, 110 ; provincial Estates system in, 13 ; self-government, 1848 demands, 81-3 ; (1866), 115-16. *See also* Germany.
Prussianism, development of, as policy, 86-93, 233 ; conflict with Christianity, 177 ; German philosophers' tribute to, 186 ; fostered by German education, 189.
Public meetings, growth of, as factor in politics, 167.

Race, difficulties of, in politics, 9 ; in Austria, 83, 133, 135, 244.
Rational law, self-government, protection of, 5 ; under autocracies, 6.
'Realism' of Marx, 101.
Realpolitik, Prussian theory, 101 ; German materialism, 187.
Reform Act (1832), 72 ; (1867), 151, 165 ; (1884), 206.
Reichsrat, the, in Austria, 137.
Reichstag, the, in Germany, bureaucractic and imperial control (1871 onwards), 128-30.
Religion, loss of political power, 262 ; and political reform, 119 ; reactionary in France, 199 ; opposed politically to Prussian form of government, 177 ; as war instrument in Germany, 292 ; in Italy, 283.
Renascence, provincial (1780-1830), 70, *footnote* 71.
Representative Government (Mill), 153-7.
Representation, government by. *See* Franchise *and* Self-government.
Resolution, Russian (1917), 284.
Revolution, anarchist form of, 246 ; ideals of, after 1830, 78 ; periods of, 34-53, 58-61, 63-107 ; pre-war, 230 ; spirit of, without violence, 79 ; in financial control, House of Lords' rejection of Budget, 266 ; State fear of self-government leading to, 67 ; American, 48 ; English (1689), 25, 260, 261 ; Chartist movement, 79 ; French, 45, (1871), 108, *footnote* 145, Paris Commune (1871), 145 ; Greek (1863), 108 ; Polish (1863), 108, 109 ; Russian, 244, street fighting in Cronstadt (1917), *footnote* 145 ; Sinn Fein (1916), 260 ; Suffragettes, pre-war, 261 ; Turkish (1908), 252 ; Ulster, pre-war spirit of, 260.
Ricardo, David, 71.
Rome, Church of, power in Germany, Empire of, rational law in, 6.
v. Roon, Graf. A. T. E., army reform, 123-4, 126.
Rousseau, Jean Jacques, on democracy, 7, 88 ; influence of, on causes of French Revolution, 46-7.
Rumania, self-government in (1866), 117 ; German intrigues in (1914), 293.
Rumans, the, position of, in Hungarian Parliament, 135, 140, 244.
Ruskin, John, on labour's interests, 97.

Russo-Japanese War, 231 ; effect of, in Russia, 245 ; bureaucracy exposed by, 246.
Ruthenes, the, Austro-Hungarian tyranny over, 243.
Russia, autocracy in, 192-6, possible defeat of, in Great War, 283-5 ; constitution of, reforms in, attempted (1815), 66, (1858) and (1863), 114, (1906), 231, 248; democracy immature, 232 ; despotism of, 94 ; Duma, institution of, 1, 248, limitations of (1907-1917), 249, 250 ; franchise, demands for, 246, 247 ; German influence in, 126, pre-war, 234, 293, intrigues during Great War, 251 ; Hungarian attitude towards, 140 ; on Polish question, 126, 182 ; revolutions in (1904-1905), 231, 244-252 ; first, of (1917), 145, *footnote* 252, 284 ; self-government in, demand for, 52, inception of, 1, 61, 248 ; socialism, anarchist type of, 78 ; strike, the universal (1905), 248, 260 ; Tsar's liberalism (1815), 66 ; War, the Great, momentous issue of, for, 283-5.

St. Simon, L., Duc de, socialist scheme of, 99.
Salonika, pre-war importance of, 140.
Sardinia, in Austrian war, 110 ; kingdom of, beginning of Italian unity, 114 ; self-government pledge upheld in, 84, 93.
Saxony, under the Empire (1871), 130, 132.
Scandinavia, *See under* Norway *and* Sweden.
Schleswig and Holstein, Prussian conquest of, 126.
Scotland, education in, 37.
Secret service, efficiency of, as military factor, 234.
Self-government, ideal of, as political theory, 226-8, 227-9, 240-41, 276, 281-2; on education boards, 166 ; officialdom problem in, 157 ; parliamentary systems, criticism of, 256-72, 276, variations in two Chambers, 119, 121 ; reforms needed in twentieth-century type of, 231-3, 271-77 ; universal desire for, twentieth century, 275 ; Great War in relation to, 235, momentous issue of, 280-3, effect of, remarkable, 287-92, in reconstruction troubles, 296-7 ; Bagehot on, 153-7 ; Mill on, 153-7. *See also under names of countries.*
Sembat, , pacifism of, 238.
Serbia, constitution of, reformed (1869), 118 ; Austrian domination of, history, 241, 242 ; menace to, pre-war, 140 ; race jealousy of, 244 ; revolution in (1903), 230.
Shire Court, 14.
Sicily, self-government in (1812), 66.
Sinn Fein, movement, German influence on, 234 ; reply to arming in Ulster, 260.
Skuptshina, the institution of, 118.
Slavs, the, in Hungary, 136.
Sleswig, 182.
Slovaks, the, 135, 244.
Slovenes, the, hostility of, to Austrian government and German influence, 137, 244.
Sobranje, the, institution of, 118.
Social Democrat Party, German, foundation of, 112 ; in Great War, 181.
—— reform, twentieth century, British, 264 ; French, 262 ; German use of, in politics, 182.
Socialism, beginnings of, European evidence of, 77 ; *v.* individualism, 97 ; international conferences, 172, 232, 236 ; Marx's aims and influence, 99-107 ; pre-war political mis-reading of, 236-40 ; syndicalist aims in, 260 ; Belgian, German intrigues (1914), 293 ; British tyranny of, averted, 107 ; French, idealistic politics, 45, active in government, 201, 261 ; German, history and development of, 179-81, party majority of,

273, State, 183, war party's use of, 285; Russian (1904), 245, pre-war policy, unwise, 251, German influence on, 252, 285; *See also* Christian Socialism.
Socialist Congresses, International, limited ideals of, 181, 233, 236.
Sorel, Georges, revolutionary doctrines of, 259.
South Africa, German influence in, 234, 265.
—— African War, pre-disposition to Great War, 230.
—— America, self-governing republics, 69.
Spain, constitution of, mediæval, 12; monarchy (1869), 118, (1874), 122, 118, republic (1873), 118, modern methods in, 93; Bourbon despotism in, overthrow of (1834), 118; colonisation, early, 22; liberal revolution in, 68; self-government in (1812), 52, 66, fear of, in modern state, 283.
State, the, conception of, under self-government and under despotism, 30, 31, 32; socialist conception of duty of, 97; Robert Owen's scheme, 98; French ideal, 49; German ideal, Power of Master-State, 177-90, 226.
States-general, French (1789), 12, 48; in the Netherlands, 12.
Stephen, Sir James, bureaucratic power of, 156.
Stolypin, P. A., policy of, 249, 250.
Strike, as method of reform, 260; universal, Russian (1905), 248, 260.
Stuart monarchy, and self-government, 22.
Suffrage, universal, progress totowards, 11-17, 111; Austrian, 242; British, Chartists' demands, 78 (1848), demand, 80; extension but not universal (1867), 151; French, 85, 93, 116, 117, 144; German, 89, 116, 117, 128; Spanish, 118; Russian demand, 247.
Suffragette movement, 261.
Swoden, constitution of, parliament established (1866), 115; executive uncontrolled by parliament, 93; modern discontent with, 63, 65; democratic principles, spread of, without violence, 57; Danish power in, 122; Norway under, 66; independence of, 231.
Switzerland, early democracy, 18; constitution, 66, discontent with, 63; German intrigues, 234; self-government in, with referendum, 268.
Syndicalism, in Franco, 259.
Syria, 254.

Talaat, Pasha, power of, in 'Young Turk' movement, 253.
Three Estates. *See* Estates *and* Cortes.
Tory party, in mid-Victorian times, 158.
Trade, increase of, in Europe, 60; democracy feared by capitalists, 175; financial methods, modern 174; German, war promoted by, 185; imperial, motive of expansion, 175; mediæval, power of, 11; middle-class control through, from (1833), 96; political importance of, 23, 24, 56.
—— Union, first, 67, 106; aims of, 107; development after (1825), 79; engineers, 106; in State, no recognition of, 64.
—— Unions Act (1871), 165.
Triple Alliance (1879 and 1882), 171.
Tudor monarchy, system of government, 19; despotism of, 24.
Turin, parliament in (1848), 84.
Turkey, constitution of, parliament instituted, 1; despotism in, 94; revolution in (1908), 231, 252-4; self-government, attompted by, 61; Young Turk, movement, 253; Armenia, attitude towards, 182; German domination of, 232; Italy, war with (1910), 231; Serbia, influenco in, 242.

Ukranians, German influence, 233.
Ulster, German intrigues in, 234; rebellion unmolested, 260.
United States of America, constitution of, early, 26, 28, after revolution, 35-45, modern, 120, 258; education, 37; geographical isolation of, in international politics, 38, 45; income tax struggle, 39; Monroe Doctrine instituted, 69; President of, status of, 146; self-government in, 35-45, 51, 53; socialist experiments in, 99.
Universities, democratic teaching in, 68; German, State control of, 187.

Venezelos, Eleftherios, first power of, 231.
Verona, Congress of (1822), 67.
Vestry, early self-government, 21.
Victor Emmanuel (Italy), self-government pledge kept by, 84.
Viviani, 202.

Wallachia, representative council (1856), 117.
War, moral and psychological effects of, 286-91; forms of government affected by, 4; mediæval form of, 17; modern methods, 185; militarism, increase of, in peace, 170, 171, 172; nationalism, cause of, 108-9; Supreme Lord of, 130; American presidential power over, 41; British Volunteer system, 290; French impoverished by, 171; German policy of, 87, 91, 92, 257, 286; preparations of, 235, 285-6; Socialist majority, incentive to, 273-4.
War, the Great, premonitions and predispositions to, long warning, 230-77; supreme issue of, 278-97; self-government parliaments affected by, 2, 3, 4, 61, 62; effect of, on German socialists, 181, on German Romanists, 179.
Wars of the Roses, 19.
Whig party, foundation of, 26; in mid-Victorian times, 158; Irish policy of, 160.
William I. (Germany), result of militarism of, 126; army reforms of, 123-4.
William II. (Germany), on international law, *cit.*, 279; political power of, 128, 129; on militarism, *cit.*, 131; Lutheran Church, controlled by, 178; socialism, attitude towards, 180.
William III. (England), king by invitation of nation's representatives, 73.
Wool trade, mediæval, nobles' rights in, 14.
Workmen's Compensation Act, 212.
Würtemburg, under the Empire (1871), 130.

Yeomen, status of, in early times, 21; decline of, as landowners, 24, 63.
'Young Turk' movement, 231, 235, 252.

Zemstva, the, 193, 245, 250; early demands of, 246; limitations of (1917), 284.
'Zollverein,' German foundation of, 88.

Printed by T. and A. Constable, Printers to His Majesty
at the Edinburgh University Press

Date Due

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PRINTED IN U. S. A. CAT. NO. 23233

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